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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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Palestinian Affairs

Former Palestinian Official Unable To Confirm 12 Apr Date for PNC Meeting

JN0102180596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1530 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Quray', also known as Abu-'Ala' [former Palestinian Authority official and member of the elected Palestinian Legislative Council], has stated that he does not know whether 12 April is the date for the meeting of the Palestine National Council [PNC]. According to the Taba agreement, the PNC is supposed to meet within two months of the elections.

Quray' told our correspondent Yasir 'Atilah that he cannot predict PNC decisions or whether its intention is to abolish the Palestinian Charter or some of its articles that call for destruction of the State of Israel. He said this issue will be decided by the PNC when it meets.

'Sources' Say Palestinian Council To Announce New Plan for Independence

JN0102155396 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 1 Feb 96 p 1

["Exclusive" report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian political sources have disclosed that during its upcoming meeting, the Palestine National Council [PNC] will announce a new political program to achieve national independence based on the following three principles: Establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, the refugees' right to repatriation, and self-determination.

The sources said that this major trend of Fatah, the PLO's mainstream, which has been leading the peace process over the past two years and which has signed transitional agreements with the Israeli side, will lead to the opening of final status negotiations through which the Palestinian side will struggle to achieve Palestinian national independence.

Jamal al-Surani, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, announced yesterday the committee will meet within a week after the PNC's invitation to discuss amending the Palestinian Charter.

Al-Surani added that the committee will meet within a week to discuss several matters, including the PNC's session to discuss amending the Palestinian National Charter. Al-Surani, however, did not name any venue for the meeting.

Palestinian 'Urayqat on Jerusalem Issue; al-Maliki on Final Talks

TA0102200996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat today denied that serious consultations were being conducted these days over the issue of Jerusalem. He stressed that the statements made a few days ago by Faysal al-Husayni and attorney Ziyad Abu-Zayyad referred only to cultural and academic seminars and are unrelated to the process of negotiations that will be launched in May.

Dr. Riyad al-Maliki, a Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine leader, has said that he will not turn down any invitation, if such an invitation is extended, to participate in the talks on a final settlement, but that he will do so with certain conditions. He noted that the Palestinian opposition will apparently participate with certain conditions in the upcoming municipal and rural council elections.

PLO Officials Seek New Covenant, Role Definition Change

TA0202095096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Several PLO officials say they support issuing a new Palestinian covenant, instead of changing the relevant clauses in the existing one. In order to prevent embarrassment to the PLO and not to bow to Israeli dictates, they say that a new covenant would include the right to return and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state whose capital is Jerusalem.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0505 GMT on 2 February carries a related report by Yoni Ben-Menahem, who adds: "Mamduh Nawfal, member of the Palestine National Council [PNC] and the PLO Central Committee, thinks the PNC convention should address the new identity of the PLO." Nawfal is cited as saying that "there is a national need to revise the PLO's identity as an organization fighting for liberation and redefine it as a body supporting the newly established Palestinian entity and the Palestinian state-to-be. Mamduh Nawfal, who lives in Amman, will soon come to the territories."]

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'Initial Results' of Northern Gaza Election Rerun Announced

JN0102154096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] The Central Election Committee has announced the initial results of the Legislative Council elections in Northern Gaza Strip constituency, after completing the vote counting process at the 76th and 39th polling centers where the election reruns took place.

According to the initial and semifinal results, those who won Legislative Council membership in the Northern Gaza Strip constituency are as follows: Dr. Yusuf Abu-Safiyyah, Fu'ad 'Id, Hisham 'Abd-al-Raziq, Dr. 'Abd-al-Rahman Hamad, Dr. Karam Zarandah, Dr. Kamal al-Shirati, and 'Imad al-Faluji.

Dr. Riyad al-Khudari, Central Election Committee spokesman, said the committee is doing its best to announce the final and official results of the Legislative Council elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip before the 'Id al-Fitr holiday [approximately 19 February].

Habash, PFLP Cadres Reportedly To Return to Palestinian Authority Area

JN0202115596 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 2 Feb 96 p 20

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — QUDS PRESS — An official from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] said that the PFLP leadership has made a decision on the return to the self-rule area of a number of its Political Bureau and Central Committee members, as well as ordinary PFLP cadres. 'Abd-al-Rahim Malluh, member of the PFLP Political Bureau, said that a list of PFLP leaders was submitted to the Palestinian Authority [PA] to ensure their return.

Malluh added: The PFLP decided in a meeting held recently to include the members in the Palestine National Council [PNC] in the lists submitted to Acting PNC Speaker Salim al-Za'nun which he will give to the PA to ensure their return to the Palestinian territory.

Malluh, who is also a member of the PLO Executive Committee, noted that the list of the PFLP members submitted to the PNC contains 40 names, including PFLP Secretary General George Habash and his assistant Abu-'Ali Mustafa, [Mustafa al-Zibri]. He added that the return of those people should not be conditional.

Malluh noted that the PFLP has not yet named the leaders who will return and those who will remain in the diaspora, adding that these names will be defined in accordance with the requirements of the front's organizational and political action. He said that a meeting will be held later to define these matters, noting that the front submitted the names of 650 members to ensure their return to the Palestinian territory.

Habash, 650 PFLP Members Seek Admittance to Palestinian Territories

TA0202095896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A group of 650 activists from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestinian [PFLP], headed by George Habash, wish to come to the autonomy. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that besides Habash, entry into the territories is being sought by members of the PFLP Political Bureau, Central Committee, and other activists. Some 40 of them are Palestine National Council members. The PFLP will soon pass a list of members seeking admittance to the autonomy on to the Palestinian Authority . [passage omitted]

Palestinian DFLP, PFLP Spokesmen Cited on Question of Return

MM0102125896 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 1 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Mufid 'Awwad: "Habash Will Not Return to Palestinian Territories; Hawatimah Ready To Return With His Cadres"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, occupied Jerusalem — The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] has announced that its Secretary General Dr. George Habash will not return to the Palestinian territories, contrary to what its ally, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], has said.

'Abd-al-Rahim Malluh, member of the PFLP Political Bureau, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Amman: We support the right to return our homeland. This right is the rule, but Habash will be the exception to this rule.

For his part, Taysir Khalid, member of the DFLP Political Bureau, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Amman: Everyone is ready to return, including Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah. However, Khalid told Israeli radio that Habash has expressed a wish to return.

Malluh said in his statement: We support the right to return to our homeland and to exercise this right at the leadership and grassroots level. We are for the return of the Palestine National Council [PNC] members who belong to the PFLP, because it is their right and also their duty.

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He said: We are awaiting arrangements with the quarters concerned to go ahead with this matter. We are ready and waiting for the problem concerning the arrangements to be resolved. He said: It should be understood that we do not accept any political conditions for our return, such as linking our return to the amendment of the Palestinian National Charter.

Malluh pointed out that there could be exceptions for political, personal, or organizational reasons. Thus some leaders and cadres might not return. But the exceptions will not affect the principled decision concerning our return. He pointed out that Habash is an exception.

Taysir Khalid, who is also a PLO Executive Committee member and DFLP deputy secretary general, said that the DFLP decided at the DFLP Central Committee meeting in October 1993, a month after the Oslo agreement, in favor of the return of its cadres and elements, including Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah.

Taysir Khalid added: We in the DFLP made every effort through numerous channels — European, Russian, and Palestinian — to guarantee this right. But the Israeli Government and the Self-Rule Authority imposed restrictions on our right to return.

Khalid pointed out that matters have begun to take another direction, saying: We hope that practical arrangements will be made as soon as possible regarding our return. We and the secretary general are ready to return once the special arrangements are made. He pointed out that the DFLP's PNC members are ready to return and awaiting the necessary arrangements. But their return has nothing to do with the Israelis' conditions concerning the amendment of the Palestinian National Charter. In a statement to Israeli radio Khalid said that the PFLP Political Bureau has endorsed Habash's decision to return to the homeland's territory.

Taysir Khalid said: The DFLP is bound by strong ties to the PFLP leadership, whose first response to the Israeli offer last week was negative.

Palestinian Hamas Figure Denies Movement To Become Political Party

JN0102172096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a news conference in al-Birah town [West Bank] today, Jamal Mansur, a prominent Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] figure, said that the movement will not be transformed into a political party. He added that Hamas has not changed the stand it adopted at the meeting with the Palestinian Authority in Cairo last November, when it reiterated its commitment to continuing struggle against Israel.

This statement contradicts a statement by another Hamas official, Ghazi Hammad, who said that the movement was preparing itself for a temporary renunciation of armed struggle against Israel in order to turn to political activity.

Mansur said that Hammad was just thinking aloud, that he had expressed his personal views and not the Hamas stand. Mansur did not rule out the possibility that some Hamas members might join an Islamic political party if the stands of such a party appealed to them, as he put it.

Palestinian Opposition Report on Closure of al-Quds Radio Denied

JN0202100596 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 2 Feb 96 p 18

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus—QUDS PRESS—A source close to the Palestinian opposition forces told QUDS PRESS that reports about the near closure of al-Quds radio, which broadcasts from Damascus, in light of progress in the peace negotiations between Syria and Israel are baseless.

Press sources close to the Palestinian Authority announced that the above mentioned radio supervised by Fadl Shururu, a former member of the PLO Executive Committee, will be closed just like all Damascus-based Palestinian institutions, including the offices of Palestinian opposition factions.

Palestinian Hasan 'Asfur on Deportees, Negotiations, Constitution

JN0102161096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1120 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Interview with Hasan 'Asfur, official in charge of negotiations for the Palestinian Authority, by Yusuf al-Mahmud; place and date not given; from the "Today's Events" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Mahmud] Good evening, Brother Hasan.

['Asfur] Good evening.

[Al-Mahmud] You are also a member of the Legislative Council. Congratulations. Brother Hasan, what about our brothers who were deported from Libya, and what are the latest developments in this issue here in the homeland and there in Libya, where some deportees are still waiting near the Egyptian-Libyan border?

['Asfur] As you and everyone else knows, this issue is a priority for the authority, particularly brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], who is personally supervising and following this issue to find an appropriate

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solution and preserve the dignity of the Palestinians in that area. The president is following this issue with the brothers in Egypt and with the Israeli side. The Egyptians are playing an important political role within the framework of relations with Libya to stop the forced deportation. They succeeded in postponing the deportation of a group of Palestinians. The brothers in Egypt are working on this issue. The brother president is also following it up directly with the Israeli side in order to find a solution to the plight of some families in al-Sallum area between Egypt and Libya. This issue is of special interest because of the conditions under which the Palestinian families in al-Sallum area are living.

[Al-Mahmud] Brother Hasan 'Asfur from the Palestinian National Authority, is there any possibility of guaranteeing a decent life for all Palestinians in the homeland?

['Asfur] Sure. Our main goal, as you know, is to ensure that the Palestinians live in free and humane conditions in their homeland. [passage omitted]

[Al-Mahmud] Palestinian negotiator Hasan 'Asfur, a round of negotiations is scheduled for May. What is on the Palestinian negotiator's agenda to presented to the Israeli negotiator? The refugee issue?

['Asfur] As you know, brother Yusuf, the president and brother Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] are supervising the final status negotiations. Working groups have been formed to prepare for these negotiations, which, we believe, will be devoted to achieving a comprehensive settlement based on the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with holy Jerusalem as its capital, God willing. Other issues include the settlements, Jerusalem, border demarcation, mutual security, cooperation, common resources with neighboring countries, and how to end the state of conflict and the historical enmity to achieve what we call a historic reconciliation and positive coexistence among the parties in the past conflict. These are the main points in the final status negotiations.

[Al-Mahmud] Member of the newly elected Legislative Council Hasan 'Asfur. What is the first issue you will present to the Legislative Council?

['Asfur] It is very difficult to talk about a personal issue.

[Al-Mahmud] It is not personal.

['Asfur] We are talking about the tasks of the Legislative Council. In addition to procedural issues, such as the election of the president, the vice presidents, and the speaker of the Legislative Council, we will tackle the formulation of the bylaws of the Palestinian Authority during the transition period. These bylaws will become a provisional Palestinian constitution to regulate the political, economic, and social life of the Palestinian people during the transition period. This, in my view, is a vital issue that must be recognized. The powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial authorities should also be defined. As a result, we will experience a new political life and a new Palestinian society. We will also have to tackle several vital Palestinian issues during the transitional period.

[Al-Mahmud] Thank you, Hasan 'Asfur, member of the Legislative Council.

['Asfur] Thank you.

[Al-Mahmud] God be with you.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Ambassador Indyk Interviewed in Israel on Syrian Talks

TA0102192996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1840 GMT 31 Jan 96

[Studio interview with U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk by correspondent Ehud Ya'ari; date not given; from the weekly "Focus" program — recorded, in English with Hebrew subtitles; transcribed from the English]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Ya'ari] As the talks with the Syrians in Maryland are coming to a close today, I am reminded of the fact that in the past it was reported that President al-Asad had some misgivings about the fact that Secretary Baker, and then Secretary Christopher, used to come to Damascus with a few top officials who were of the Jewish faith. He was quoted, I think, at least once as calling them the rabbis. Do you think it has affected in any way the course of the negotiations?

[Indyk] I don't actually recall President al-Asad ever making any kind of statement like that. I think it was actually somebody in Prime Minister Shamir's office that made such a statement.

[Ya'ari] From here?

[Indyk] That's right. But as far as President al-Asad's dealings with senior administration officials of the Jewish faith, I think that there has been no effect on that. He has come to see us, whether it be Dennis Ross or myself or others, as representatives of the United States Government with a special understanding of Israel, and I think he values the opinions and the judgments that we bring to the negotiations. [passage omitted]

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[Ya'ari] Some people in Israel have gained the impression that sometimes the American Administration probably tends to be overoptimistic as to the prospects of moving forward fast on the Syrian track.

[Indyk] You know; It's an interesting game in Israel to determine whether at any particular moment one is optimistic or pessimistic, and anybody who expresses optimism is immediately countered by the pessimists. I think that what matters is not optimism or pessimism. What matters is an objective assessment of what is happening in the negotiations, and as I've said, there is a difference in these negotiations to the negotiations that have taken place over the last three and a half years. They are more intensive; they are more creative; there is more of a commitment to try to solve the problems; it's more informal — and that is the basis for our judgment that progress can be made, is being made, and that it is possible to reach an agreement this year.

Let me just make a point about that, though, because these intensive negotiations have been going for a month. When the negotiations with the Palestinians entered this kind of intensive phase in Oslo, it took, I think, at least six months to get an agreement. The same was true with the Jordanian negotiations, and bear in mind: With the Jordanians, a lot of ground had been covered for many years before that, and it still took six or seven months. So, it's not unreasonable that after one month we don't have some dramatic breakthrough. It will take time. Both sides are dealing in a very serious way with very serious issues, and your government and the Syrian Government are taking these negotiations very seriously because their vital interests are at stake. So, to expect that there is going to be some kind of breakthrough is totally unrealistic.

[Ya'ari] But we don't see, Mr. Ambassador, a bridge over the River Wye, Wye Plantation. You are talking about intensive, and we hear other officials talking about intensive talks and better atmosphere, and people loosening up their ties, etc. But we don't see the beginning of a structure of an understanding.

[Indyk] Well, I think there is the beginning of a structure of an understanding. I think that that is (?accumulating) over time, but it is beginning to be put in place.

[Ya'ari] Could you elaborate on that?

[Indyk] In terms of the four legs that we know have been put on this table — the question of the nature of peace, normalization — I think it's become clear that the Syrians do accept the concept of normal peaceful relations with Israel: open borders to tourism and trade, diplomatic relations. There is the question of timing, which is the second leg: when the interphasing of withdrawal and the steps of peace will take place. And while there has been some narrowing, gaps still exist on the question of timing. There is now the idea of comprehensiveness that has been proposed by Israel, and essentially accepted by Syria.

[Ya'ari] Although Foreign Minister Baraq says that 20 jellabas don't make a peace.

[Indyk] Well, you know, I don't think he exactly said that, but we believe very strongly that Israel deserves to have full acceptance of the Arab world — save for those rogue states of Iraq, Iran, and Libya — and that it is important that when Syria makes peace, that as a way of underscoring that this is the end of the Arab-Israeli conflict, that the rest of the Arab world — save the rogue states — also establish normal diplomatic relations with Israel. And I think that that will herald the quiet miracle of a normal life that President Clinton seeks for Israel and that is very important for Israel and something that we are working very hard [words indistinct] what we did with Foreign Minister Baraq and the foreign minister of Tunisia — the announcement in Washington of diplomatic relations with Tunisia. I think that was one example of the importance of normalizing Israel's status in the Middle East.

[Ya'ari] The fourth leg, of course, is the security package. Do you think that the time is coming that the United States will propose some sort of ideas, general outline, offer a security package?

[Indyk] We have done this in the past. People seem to forget that we put together a nonpaper on the framework of security arrangements, the principles and objectives of the security arrangements. We negotiated a nonpaper; it was an American nonpaper between Prime Minister Rabin and President al-Asad. This is part of our role as facilitator. When the parties want it, we are prepared to offer our ideas, to put forward our formulations, and we will do so, but we will do so working with Israel and with Syria. As a facilitator in that process, we have two basic principles here: 1) We will not put ourselves in a position of wanting this agreement more than the parties themselves. 2) We will work with Israel, not against it. It's in that context that Prime Minister Rabin felt comfortable with our role of putting forward ideas, and I believe that Prime Minister Peres and the Government of Israel feels comfortable with our playing that role now.

[Ya'ari] By the way, when the American Administration is speaking about the Golan, do you mean the Golan all the way up to the international border, or all the way down to the fourth of June lines?

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[Indyk] The United States Government does not take a position on what the line of withdrawal should be. That is up to the parties to negotiate.

[Ya'ari] But still, the Syrian demand for territory which lies beyond the international border means that Syria is demanding a territory which was part of British mandatory Palestine. And, there is, if I am not mistaken, a claim by Mr. 'Arafat, who is saying: Hey, guys, if there is anything between the international border and the fourth of June, it's the Palestinian Golan. What do you say to him?

[Indyk] We say the same thing — that we don't take a position on what the line of withdrawal should be. That is up to the parties to negotiate, and we will do our best to facilitate that negotiation, but we will not take a position; we will not impose our position on them.

That said, I think it's our judgment that it will not be possible to achieve a peace with Syria without full withdrawal, but what exactly that full withdrawal means is up to the parties to define.

[Ya'ari] You've met President al-Asad many times before. A guy like me — I suspect that probably President al-Asad is simply undecided, that he is simply too worried, too concerned, confused — I am not sure about the exact term — and this is why it's taking him so long to make up his mind.

[Indyk] I don't think that President al-Asad is indecisive. He has shown at critical moments, such as after Saddam Husayn's invasion of Kuwait, that he is quite capable of taking decisive action when necessary and he is put in a position where it becomes necessary to do so.

[Ya'ari] That was an easy one.

[Indyk] Well, it was not easy for al-Asad; it was not easy. But in terms of making peace with Israel, I think he is very cautious by nature, suspicious of the motives — of your motives and our motives — and he is going to act as he has always acted, in a very cautious, deliberate manner. He, I think, subscribes to that Arab proverb that says: "Haste is from the devil," in part because he feels a sense of urgency was a source of weakness for al-Sadat, for 'Arafat, for King Husayn. He is almost determined, as a matter of principle, not to show that he is in a hurry.

[Ya'ari] Why was Secretary Christopher disappointed after the previous round at the Wye Plantations?

[Indyk] Well, I think that the secretary, as he said publicly, felt that good progress had been made and was quite optimistic, but I think the secretary is conscious of the fact that it is an election year, here and in the United States, and there's not a lot of time. And so, he feels a certain impatience and desire to see the pace of the negotiations accelerated.

[Ya'ari] Probably Mr. al-Asad is heeding the messages that, it has been argued, were sent to him by Likud leaders. It was also confirmed by Foreign Minister al-Shar' a few months ago in Washington. Do you know anything about messages from Israeli opposition to Syria?

[Indyk] Well, as the U.S. Government, we deal, it is our responsibility to deal, with the Government of Israel and the Government of Syria, and we are not in the business of passing messages. It would create a lot of confusion if we engaged in that kind of business. So we have not passed any messages.

[Ya'ari] But do you know of a message?

[Indyk] Well, I have seen Foreign Minister al-Shar's statement on CNN. I have also seen Bibi Netanyahu's denial of that. Al- Shar's statement is something we heard from the Syrians ourselves.

[Ya'ari] Do the parties, Israel and Syria, have by now, in your opinion, a clear idea of to what extent the United States is or would be willing to foot the bill for a deal? It is going to be extremely costly.

[Indyk] When Prime Minister Rabin came to the White House in March of 1993, he told President Clinton that he was prepared to take calculated risks for peace, and the President said to him: If you're going to do that, my job is not to tell you how to do it or when to do it; my job is to minimize those risks. It is in that context of a pact, an agreement that was struck between Rabin and Clinton, and has now been struck again between Peres and Clinton, that the President sees his responsibility to help to minimize those risks. We have not engaged with the Government of Israel in any discussion of what that would involve because we do not know yet, in terms of where the negotiations are, what would be involved.

[Ya'ari] Some people are talking to the tune of $5 billion in military expenses, from the Israeli side only. Where do you get this money?

[Indyk] Well, I have seen those reports. Again, as Eli Rubinstein used to say: We'll double-cross that bridge when we come to it. There is a budget reality in the United States which I think everybody is aware of here. It will be difficult. On the other hand, the President believes that a comprehensive peace that would end the Arab-Israeli conflict is something that the United States should support and that Congress will support. And he is committed to doing what he can to help Israel make that peace, including going to Congress and seeking some tangible support to help defray the costs.

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[Ya'ari] Including probably some help in equipment in order to help the Syrians scale down and modernize their army?

[Indyk] That is simply not on the agenda. [passage omitted]

[Ya'ari] Finally, Mr. Ambassador, Secretary Christopher is coming next week, just before a decision maybe taken for early elections.

[Indyk] Yes, he will be out here next week. It will be his 17th visit, which I think is a manifestation of his very strong resolve, and the President's very strong resolve to try to achieve a comprehensive peace, in this case to try to achieve an agreement between Israel and Syria. As I said before, we are not operating these negotiations on the basis of some kind of stop watch. He will be coming here to try to make more progress, regardless of what decisions the Government of Israel makes. His eye is on the ball of comprehensive peace. We believe Israel deserves that. We are going to work as hard as we possible can to achieve that.

[Ya'ari] And you would expect the same pace of negotiations with Syria to be maintained even if a decision for early elections is taken in Israel?

[Indyk] I am really not going to get into speculation about what will happen if a decision is taken. I think that the Government of Israel will make its decision and we will focus on the negotiations, and when a decision is taken, we will adjust accordingly. But our focus is on the negotiations, and we are not going to get into the business of influencing this decision.

[Ya'ari] Thank you very much Ambassador Indyk.

Damascus Reports Conclusion of Syrian-Israeli Talks

JN0102130096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington — Another round of Syrian- Israeli talks held in the U.S. State of Maryland ended on 31 January. This round was held in two stages under the supervision and with the participation of the United States. This round of talks is expected to be followed by a visit to the region by the U.S. secretary of state in the next few days to discuss the results and the subsequent steps concerning the peace process on the Syrian- Israeli track.

The United States stressed that it will continue its efforts to achieve a peace agreement on the Syrian track, even if Israel calls for early general elections.

U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said: It would be in the interests of the United States for Israel and Syria to arrive at a peace agreement. Consequently, whether early elections are held in Israel or not, we will continue our efforts with confidence. In a press release, Burns said: Even if early elections were held, the intensity of our participation in this process will not diminish. Burns said: The United States believes that the process will be lengthy and difficult. Burns also said: One of the main objectives of Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region will be to determine the way the peace process will continue and in what form.

Martin Indyk, U.S. ambassador to Israel, stressed that complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights is necessary if Israel is to achieve peace with Syria. In an interview with Israeli television yesterday, Indyk said: In our view, it will not be possible to achieve peace with Syria without Israel's complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Damascus Radio Cites Ross Statement on Syrian-Israeli Talks

JN0102144796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Washington — The Syrian-Israeli-U.S. talks ended in Maryland, near Washington, last night.

Dennis Ross, U.S. special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, said in a statement that this round of talks significantly advanced discussions on key issues concerning a forthcoming peace agreement and made it possible for each side to clarify its views and needs. He added that during the discussions, the two sides presented ideas for tackling some of their differences. He said these ideas will be reviewed by officials of the two countries. Ross said that security arrangements were the main subject discussed. He said that the talks revealed agreement on some key points. He added that this is not surprising, because the talks also revealed differences on basic issues.

Ross pointed out that the Syrian and Israeli negotiators agree that the talks provided a solid basis for U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region next week and for possible talks in the future. [passage omitted]

Israel's Savir, Rabinovich: Agreement With Syria 'Possible' in 1996

TA0202120996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 2 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Progress in the negotiations with Syria was made on all the subjects that were discussed, Foreign Ministry Director-General Uri Savir

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said after the latest round of talks concluded Wednesday night.

Both he and Ambassador to the US Itamar Rabinovich said that it is possible to reach a peace agreement this year.

"In all areas, after two rounds of talks, we have moved up at least one level on the way to moving the process forward," Savir said.

According to a senior Israeli source, this round of talks at the Wye Plantation in Maryland focused mainly on security arrangements. He said that for the first time ideas were raised whose goal is "to provide a joint basis for further progress."

The source, however, stressed that the gaps between the sides remain wide.

Normalization, development, economic cooperation and the comprehensiveness of an eventual agreement were also discussed he said. The subject of water will only be broached in separate talks.

The US, Savir said, took upon itself to play a leading role in the water issue, to ensure that the needs of both Israel and Syria are met.

The Wye procedure — talks putting forth bridging proposals which are then brought to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, then more talks — is a good way to make progress, as the talks are still in the conceptual stage, Savir said.

The next stage — the actual negotiations — will be done by separate small working groups that will draw up a peace treaty, he added. [passage omitted]

Peres repeated his optimism about the prospects for an agreement with Syria, declaring that al-Asad "has taken the path to peace and I think it is only a matter of time before we have peace with Syria and Lebanon."

This week's negotiations represented "quite an achievement," he told reporters in London yesterday.

Peres noted there was 'a little progress" every time Christopher visited Jerusalem and Damascus, and while "no one should expect everything will be solved in one visit," next week's round of regional diplomacy by Christopher "shows that the negotiations are very much alive, even if it goes at a slow pace."

Regarding media pessimism Savir quoted Peres: "What is happening is not reflected (in the press), and what is reflected is not what's happening."

"I am not sorry about that," he added, noting that the further the negotiations progress, so will the gap between what is happening in the talks and what is reported by the media.

"A lot of work remains before us," he said, "but with the same spirit that characterized the first two rounds, and with the same discretion and seriousness, it is possible to reach a peace agreement this year." [passage omitted]

The Israeli delegation left for home yesterday. The next round of talks in Maryland is expected in a few weeks.

U.S., Turkey Said Discussing Israeli, Syrian Water Needs

NC0102190196 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Feb 96

[From a report by MBC's correspondent in Washington 'Aziz Fahmi]

[FBIS Translated Text] MBC has learned that the United States has initiated exploratory talks with Turkey. The talks are about supplying Syria with its water needs in return for allowing Israel to acquire its water requirements from the Golan.

'Arafat Holds Talks With Israeli Housing Minister

JN0102203696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat stressed that peace is the Palestinian people's strategic option.

At a joint news conference with Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, Israeli minister of construction and housing, following their talks at the presidency in Gaza today, President 'Arafat added that the Palestinian side is committed to peace.

'Arafat stressed the continuation of cooperation to implement what has been reached, pointing out that means to follow up these issues have been discussed.

'Arafat described his talks with Ben-Eli'ezer as positive and constructive and as strongly advancing peace and the means for the accurate and honest implementation of what has been agreed upon.

'Arafat noted that the settlement issue was discussed in general terms. He thanked Ben-Eli'ezer for visiting Gaza during the blessed month of Ramadan. He said: I would like to convey my greetings to Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. He pointed out that he will meet with Peres in Davos during his visit to Switzerland.

The Israeli construction and housing minister said: We cannot deny that the Palestinians will be the Israelis' partners on the same land. The minister stressed that

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peaceful coexistence is the only way to guarantee this. He expressed admiration of the success of the first Palestinian legislative elections.

Ben-Eli'ezer said he considers the success of the Palestinian elections as extraordinary. He described the elections as the most important political event in the region.

The Israeli housing minister congratulated President 'Arafat on his election as president of the National Authority. He stressed Israel's commitment to the peace process and expressed his hope for the establishment of Palestinian industrial zones.

Israel's Ben-Eli'ezer Meets 'Arafat, Discusses Covenant, 'Terror'

TA0202083596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Report by Gay Qotev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Ben-Eli'ezer is the first Israeli official to visit Gaza since the liquidation of the "Engineer" [on 5 January 1996]. His entourage arrived at 'Arafat's office on the Gaza waterfront under heavy guard.

At the meeting 'Arafat told the construction and housing minister that he plans to convene the Palestine National Council [PNC] about two weeks after the final results of the autonomy council elections are received — namely, in a month, at the soonest. He maintained that the amendment of problematic Palestinian Covenant articles will be one of the first issues to be brought up. Asked how soon the Covenant will be amended, the chairman replied: It does not depend only on me, and I cannot commit myself to any definite date.

[Begin recording, in English] [Qotev] When are you going to make the changes in the Palestinian Covenant?

['Arafat] Me? This is not democracy. I haven't the ability to do it alone. I have to return back to the PNC. As soon as the meeting will take place for the PNC, we'll discuss it during this session. [end recording]

Minister Ben-Eli'ezer impressed on 'Arafat the importance of amending the Covenant for Israel, and he felt the chairman was interested in the same.

[Begin Ben-Eli'ezer recording] I feel he was very determined on this issue. I understand from him that he expects the final results of the elections to be announced within two weeks, and he said it will take him two more weeks until the PNC is assembled. He said it would be one of the first, if not the very first, item on the PNC's agenda. [end recording]

The construction minister pressed the chairman on the issue of the Palestinian Police's handling of terrorism. 'Arafat stressed his commitment to fighting terrorism and informed the visitor that the two Abu-Nidal [Sabri al-Banna] men, who infiltrated into the autonomy under the guise of policemen early this week, have been apprehended.

Minister Ben-Eli'ezer was impressed by Gaza's accelerated economic development, manifested mainly in a construction drive.

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Algeria

Fourteen Leaders of Algerian FIS Reportedly Plan New Party

LD0102150196 Rabat MAP in English 1351 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algiers, Feb. 01 (MAP) — Fourteen leaders of the Algerian banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) are contemplating to found a new political party and the move was welcomed by high ranking officials, Algerian "SOIR D'ALGERIE" reported Wednesday [31 January].

These leaders are reportedly the signatories of the letter, addressed on January 18 to Algerian President Liamine Zeroual, in which they expressed their readiness "to contribute to put an end to bloodshed" and called on the armed groups "to stop fighting".

The daily said that legal arrangements will be taken as of the end of the holy month of Ramadan and that consultations are underway throughout the country to enable them to take part in the next legislative poll.

The head of the executive committee of the FIS abroad, Rabah Kebir criticized the fourteen people for having sent the letter to the Algerian president without the consent of Abbassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, the daily added.

Six Killed in Algerian Mosque Explosion

LD0102124396 Kuwait KSC Television in Arabic 1200 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Algerian newspaper today cited eyewitnesses as saying that a bomb has exploded in the minaret of a mosque in the Algerian capital, killing six worshippers and wounding 13 others.

The LIBERTE newspaper said that the explosion took place last night when worshippers started to arrive for early evening prayers at the main mosque in Baraki, a stronghold of the armed groups in the southwest of the capital Algiers. This is considered the first destructive explosion to take place inside a mosque in Algeria during the acts of violence which the country has been witnessing since 1993.

Egypt, Algeria Confer on Antiterrorist Coordination

MM0202112996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 2 Feb 96 p 7

[Report by Ayman Kamal: "Egyptian-Algerian Coordination To Pursue 'Terrorists' Fleeing to Europe"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo — An Egyptian team of security experts has held talks in Algiers [with Algerian security experts] over the last two days to coordinate plans on how to deal with violent actions. AL-HAYAH has learned that the talks focused on ways of tackling the coordination between fugitive Egyptian and Algerian elements in Europe and on continuing security cooperation.

Egyptian security services recently intercepted communications in some European capitals between Egyptian and Algerian elements accused of involvement in terrorism. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Egypt's Musa Comments on Security Council Resolution on Sudan

NC0102162596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1415 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has emphasized that the UN Security Council's resolution denouncing Sudan is an important message addressed to the Sudanese regime. Its aim, he said, is to make the regime review its calculations and realize that the Arab, African, and world community refuses to accept Sudanese policies no matter how hard they try to beautify or deny them.

In a statement today, the foreign minister said the Sudanese regime must now cooperate with the world, African, and Arab legal system, stop its support for terrorism, and help justice in trying terrorists.

Musa said Egypt would like to see the Sudanese brothers emerge from this predicament. He remarked that Egypt does not want to create a trouble or crisis for them, but at the same time it will not tolerate, like other world countries, their terrorism policy.

He noted that the Security Council clearly asserts the entire world community's rejection of Sudan's policy of supporting terrorism. This, he added, is apparent in the text of the resolution asking Sudan to stop its backing for terrorism by sheltering and hiding terrorists, and to hand over three suspects in the attack on President Husni Mubarak's motorcade in Addis Ababa on 26 June last year.

Musa said the Security Council resolution backs a resolution passed by the African mechanism for ending and preventing disputes which asked Sudan to hand over the suspects. He noted that the resolution was unanimous.

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Egyptian Commentary Views UN Security Council Resolution on Sudan

NC0102154096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1240 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Commentary by Muhammad Sharaf: "The al-Bashir-al-Turabi Regime Has Been Exposed Before the Sudanese People and the World"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This morning the UN Security Council issued a resolution demanding the Sudanese Government cease its support for terrorist activity and stop sheltering terrorist elements. It also asked the Khartoum regime to deal with its neighbors in accordance with the UN and OAU charters. Furthermore, the Security Council asked the Sudanese Government to extradite the three suspects in the criminal attack on President Husni Mubarak to the Ethiopian Government. The Security Council denounced the flagrant violation of Ethiopia's sovereignty and the attempt to disturb security in Ethiopia and the whole region.

These are the main points of this important resolution, which strongly emphasizes the need for security and stability and the need to respect the basic principles of coexistence and relations among the African countries in particular and the countries of the world in general. The resolution is a strong international condemnation of the al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime's involvement in terrorist activity. The Sudanese regime's naive attempts to evade responsibility for this subversive policy can fool no one. The Security Council asked the UN secretary general to cooperate with the OAU to oversee the implementation of the resolution and to inform the council of the outcome of these efforts. This means that the matter has not closed with the issuance of the resolution and the condemnation of the Khartoum government's crimes. The Security Council will follow up the situation and apply the principles of the UN Charter in the event the Sudanese Government does not implement the resolution. If it does not do this, the UN Security Council resolutions will lose their practical value.

The resolution carries a very clear message to the Khartoum government. It denounces this government and clearly warns it against continuing its terrorist policy and activity. It also warns it against provoking and antagonizing its neighbors. This is the first step toward adopting practical measures against this government.

The Sudanese foreign minister has described the draft resolution urging Sudan to extradite the suspects in the Addis Ababa crime as a plot aimed at imposing sanctions on his country. He accused Egypt of trying to peddle this resolution without giving Sudan a chance to defend itself. Now that the resolution has been issued, will the Sudanese foreign minister continue to insist on his stand and accuse the whole world community, and not only Egypt, of plotting to impose sanctions on his government? This statement by the Sudanese foreign minister is indicative of the Sudanese Government's confusion and naivete and its attempt to distort facts and mislead the world.

There is enough evidence to indicate that President al-Bashir does not comprehend his responsibility toward the Sudanese people, toward neighboring countries, and toward the whole world community. Sudan's economy is collapsing and the living standards of its good and patient people are deteriorating. [passage omitted]

Egyptian Official Reiterates Need To Try Bosnian 'War Criminals'

NC0102151596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1350 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Feb (MENA)—Egypt has reiterated its position on the need to try war criminals involved in crimes committed against the Bosnian people.

This was stated by Ambassador Muhammad Fathi al-Shadhili, assistant foreign minister for European affairs, today. He added that lifting the sanctions on the Serbs must be simultaneous with a final solution to the Bosnian crisis and the implementation of the Dayton peace accord.

He said Egypt is following the progress in implementing this accord, which has been (?accepted) by the international community to settle the crisis in Bosnia politically.

Ambassador al-Shadhili noted that there is intention within the U.S. Administration to track down and try these criminals, especially after mass graves of Muslims were discovered in several locations.

Regular Sentry Shot Dead in Upper Egypt

NC0202074696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2300 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 1 Feb (MENA)—Unidentified gunmen tonight shot dead Regular Sentry Habil Labib 'Abd-al-Sayyid from the Itlidim Police Station force in Markaz Abu Qurqas in al-Minya Governorate.

A security source said that officers from the al-Minya Security Directorate and various investigative bodies went to the scene to locate the culprits. Experts from the criminal laboratory also went to the scene and the Prosecution Office was notified to start its investigations.

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Hand Grenade Found Near Police Institute in Egypt

NC0102154996 Cairo MENA in English 1455 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 1 (MENA)—A hand grenade with its fuse taken away was found by a janitor at the Cairo district of 'Ayn Shams in front of a police institute.

An official security source at the Ministry of Interior ruled out suspicion of a terrorist or criminal act but said investigations were taking place to determine why the bomb was placed in that place.

Morocco

Moroccan Foreign Ministry Accuses Algeria of 'Division' in AMU

LD0102231696 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 2127 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Statement issued by the Foreign Ministry; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Some news agencies have reported that the foreign ministers of Algeria, Mauritania, and Tunisia had met on 31 January in Algiers in the presence of Mr. Amamou, secretary general of the Arab Maghreb Union [AMU]. These sources have added that the Algerian president today received the three foreign ministers and the AMU secretary general, who made a statement after this audience.

In reply to question on this subject, the official spokesman of the Moroccan Foreign Ministry pointed out that the Algerian foreign minister had sent a letter on 23 January to all his Maghreban counterparts inviting them to attend a meeting that was described as an emergency meeting and that concerned the state of AMU and its future prospects.

The official spokesman indicated that such an emergency meeting could not be held for the reasons known to everyone, and that a group of the AMU's member states deemed the convening of such a meeting as untimely.

As regards the Algiers meeting of the ministers of the three AMU member states, the official spokesman expressed Morocco's astonishment at the holding of this meeting on the date suggested originally by the Algerian side and at the fact that this meeting was centered on the very subject suggested by the Algerian foreign minister in the invitation he had sent out [to the other AMU foreign ministers on 23 January]. The spokesman added: What is more astonishing is that AMU Secretary General Amamou attended this meeting.

The official spokesman indicated in this respect that Morocco had expressed strong reservations about the statements the secretary general deemed useful to make after this meeting. The spokesman concluded by saying that Morocco could only express regret at this situation, which could be regarded by the Moroccan and international public opinion as a factor of division.

Sudan

Sudanese Foreign Minister Says 'Seriously Studying' UN Resolution

EA0102222096 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha has affirmed that the UN Security Council has not adopted any measures or sanctions condemning Sudan.

His excellency said in a television debate, held at noon today, that paragraphs of the Security Council resolution condemned terrorism in all its forms.

He said Sudan had no disagreement with the resolution condemning terrorism and acts of violence, pointing out Sudan's full cooperation with the OAU [Organization of African Unity] in extraditing accused people to Ethiopia when information on them is available from the parties concerned.

The foreign minister added that Sudan had formed a legal committee, chaired by the public prosecutor, after it received the Ethiopian request.

His excellency said that Sudan was seriously studying the Security Council resolution and planning how to deal with its political and legal aspects.

He said it was necessary for international cooperation to reveal more facts connected with the case. His excellency reviewed information on the entry and exit of persons from the country, saying a lot of effort was required, considering the long period that had elapsed. He said the security authorities were continuing to search for the criminals.

The foreign minister added that foreign news reports on the condemnation of Sudan were part of a campaign directed against the country. His Excellency also said the U.S. Administration's decision to withdraw members of the U.S. Embassy from Khartoum had not been supported by concrete evidence. He expressed his regret at this decision and called on the U.S. Administration to reconsider it.

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Sudan Considering 'Reciprocal Decisions' to U.S. Decision

AB0102190196 London BBC World Service in English 1705 GMT 1 Feb 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sudan is once again in trouble with the United Nations and the United States. The Security Council has called on Sudan to desist from engaging in activities assisting terrorists and giving sanctuaries to terrorist elements. It also called on the Khartoum government to extradite three men wanted by Ethiopia. That was rapidly followed by an announcement by America that it was planning to pull its diplomats out of Khartoum because of security worries. My colleague, Mary Harper, is in Khartoum and she asked the foreign minister, Ali 'Uthman Taha, how he reacted to American plans to withdraw their diplomats.

[Begin recording] [Taha] That decision is regrettable, and most regrettable, because it was not based on any factual evidence or specific information. The timing of the decision [word indistinct] does reflect on the Security Council's resolution and in that respect, it could be looked at as a political decision rather than a decision based on reality.

[Harper] But the American Embassy and the American State Department are insisting that this decision is purely to do with the safety of their staff. They don't believe that their staff are safe in a country which, the Americans say, harbors terrorists.

[Taha] There has never been any indication as to any threat posed against the American diplomatic presence in Khartoum or any other diplomatic mission. Sudan has been duly executing its duties under the International Convention for the Protection of Diplomats in Sudan, and we are sure that the measures we are taking are sufficient to provide the necessary security for all diplomats in Khartoum.

[Harper] Are you considering a tit for tat....[pauses] a closing of your embassy in the United States, for example?

[Taha] At the moment, we are considering all the reciprocal decisions, but we hope that before getting into that, the administration would revise its decision.

[Harper] Just one final question: Sudan must be feeling very lonely at the moment?

[Taha] Sudan feels quite sure of itself. Sudan feels that as long as it acts and behaves according to its values and principles, it will never feel lonely. [end recording]

Sudan Voices Regret at U.S. Decision To Withdraw Diplomats

EA0102160396 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 1 February issued a statement that said that the U.S. Government has officially notified Sudan about its decision to withdraw members of its diplomatic corps in Khartoum for, as it said, security reasons.

The statement added that Washington had failed to give specific details.

The American authorities have made it clear that the U.S. decision did not mean severance of diplomatic relations or a lowering of the level of diplomatic representation. Neither did it mean any change in American policy toward Sudan or imply any hostile measures toward Sudan.

The Foreign Ministry's statement expressed the Sudanese Government's regret at the American decision which, the statement added, was not based on concrete or objective evidence.

The statement reiterated the Sudanese Government's commitment to ensuring sufficient protection for all diplomats and foreign nationals in Sudan, and American nationals in particular. This is in accordance with international charters and norms, and the traditional heritage of the great Sudanese people.

The statement went on to say that the American decision came at a time when both sides had started serious dialogue with a view to finding ways of resolving problems that strained bilateral relations.

The Sudanese Government called on the U.S. Administration to review its position for the sake of mutual interest.

Western Sahara

Polisario Reportedly Ready for Talks With Morocco

LD0102172096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bachir Mustapha Sayed, coordinator of the Saharan side to the UN mission organizing the referendum in the Western Sahara, made a statement to the Algerian press agency [APS], saying that the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] and the authorities of the Saharan Arab Republic [as heard] were ready for talks with Morocco.

He said that it was difficult to convince the other side, Morocco, to show a similar will and readiness.

The statement comes as the first reaction following the UN Security Council's approval yesterday of the motion to extend the mandate of the UN mission in the Western Sahara until 31 May 1996.

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Bahrain

Bahraini Paper Rejects 'Flagrant' Foreign Interference in Country

JN0102218296 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0800 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 1 Feb (WAKH) — A Bahraini newspaper questions the flagrant and blatant interference in Bahrain's domestic affairs by foreign parties. The paper says that the instigation practiced by some foreign parties and their use of sectarianism to achieve their goals ended in failure.

In its editorial today, the Bahraini newspaper AL-AYYAM says that the Bahraini people, who have a firsthand view of the truth, should be able to deter the foreigners' attempts to divide them. The people should demonstrate the solidarity and cohesion of sons of a unified people and should support the wise leadership in confronting sabotage and riots.

The paper adds: It appears that our region has been afflicted by some foreign parties who do not know the meaning of responsibility. We advise these parties to recall the lessons of history and learn from the past.

The paper says that interstate relations are governed by principles and rules, and Bahrain is not prepared to cancel all these ancient traditions, to which it adheres in its relations with other states, and enter into futile accusations that can only harm the region and dissipate our badly needed resources in side battles and fabricated disputes that are intended to ease the pressure of domestic troubles.

AL-AYYAM says that Bahrain categorically rejects these attempts to interfere in domestic affairs. The paper adds: Just as it treats everyone according to the principles of mutual respect and truth, Bahrain expects others to adhere to this stand and to refrain from actions that harm relations among states.

The paper notes that the Bahrain has declared its principles many times at the government and popular levels. It seems, however, that some foreign parties persist in violating the principles that govern relations among states in a way that smacks of miscalculation, as well as political and diplomatic chaos, and will have major consequences for the region.

AL-AYYAM concludes: Bahrain, which is an inseparable part of this region, wants to ensure that its actions entrench the concepts of security and stability that are the first steps towards a regional resurgence. The strange behavior by some parties will take us backward. We are not ready to give up our accomplishments. It is not our fault if others have not achieved anything.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Minister Praises Israel, Prefers 'Weak' Saddam

JN0102201196 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwaiti Information Minister Shaykh Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah praised Israel for not entering the 1991 Gulf war.

In the first such praise for Israel by a Kuwaiti official, al- Sabah said that Israel tolerated the Iraqi Scud missiles. If Israel had entered the war, the international coalition would have collapsed, the Arab states would have withdrawn, and the war would have transcended the issue of liberating Kuwait, which must appreciate Israel's stand.

Shaykh al-Sabah said that relations with Israel will be established sooner or later and are contingent on the peace process between Syria and Lebanon and Israel. The Israelis will then be able to come to Kuwait, he said.

The Kuwaiti minister concluded by saying that the empty talk of the past — namely, that we will push Israel into the sea — is over. Israel has become a reality, a fait accompli, he noted.

On another level, the minister said that a weak Saddam Husayn would be less threatening to Kuwait than some other regime. In a statement to the United Arab Emirates magazine, AL-KHALIJ, the minister said: We know Saddam and his intentions. Saddam's regime will remain a weak enemy. It is better than a dangerous regime that is unknown to us.

The Kuwaiti minister expressed the fear that the world sympathy toward his country will decline if the Iraqi president is deposed, but the current problems remain unresolved, such as the POW's, compensation, and stolen goods.

Yemen

Yemen Denies Arresting 335 Eritreans

NC0102145596 Paris AFP in English 1422 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Sanaa, Feb 1 (AFP) — Yemen on Thursday [1 February] denied it had arrested 335 Eritreans, saying Eritrea's allegations escalated their dispute over a group of strategic Red Sea islands and undermined mediation efforts.

A government spokesman issued the statement as French envoy Francis Gutmann arrived here saying

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he was upbeat about chances of resolving the conflict which degenerated into three days of fighting last month.

"Allegations" made by the Eritrean Ambassador to Cairo, Mohammad Ali Amr, about Yemen arresting Eritreans were "without any foundation," the spokesman told the official SABA news agency.

"The Eritreans in Yemen are treated like brothers," he said. "The spreading of such accusations is an unjustified escalation and doesn't help efforts by brotherly and friendly countries to resolve the problem."

The Eritrean ambassador in Cairo said 335 Eritreans, including fishermen, had been arrested by Yemeni authorities since Eritrean forces on December 18 captured Hanish al-Kabir island after three days of fighting.

"My country thinks it is possible now to help resolve the problem" over the Hanish archipelago, French envoy Gutmann said after arriving here for talks with Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, according to SABA.

France, concerned about instability in the horn of Africa, announced on January 25 that it would conduct mediation between Eritrea and Yemen over the dispute.

Yemeni Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani said Wednesday that French mediation would focus on getting the two sides to reject force and agree to arbitration by the International Court of Justice at The Hague. He said Yemen accepted the principles which would be discussed with the French envoy. [passage omitted]

Yemeni Minister Denies Sheltering 'Terrorism,' Government Rift

MM0102144496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 1 Feb 96 p 4

[Interview with Yemeni Awqaf and Guidance Minister Ghalib 'Abd- al-Kafi al-Qurashi by Naji al-Harazi in Sanaa; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-Harazi] What is your opinion of the claim that Yemen is sheltering fundamentalist or terrorist elements, and that the Yemeni Reform Grouping's [YRG] presence in the government is providing the right atmosphere for them?

[Al-Qurashi] Maybe that accusation has something to do with the presence of the YRG as a major Islamic party in the government. But it must be made clear that, if it is true that such elements are in Yemen, they come to work here, and they enter the country legally or illegally, because Yemen is an Arab and Muslim country which is open to every Arab and Muslim, and indeed non-Muslims. The YRG is not responsible for these elements.

As is known, the YRG is an Islamic party and does not believe in any form of extremism or terrorism, and its position was clear on what some extremists did in some areas in Yemen, as they harmed the country and indeed Islam itself.

We must not forget that we are in a country that is open to every Arab and Muslim, and to anyone wishing to come to this country — which may have helped the elements in question to infiltrate into Yemen.

But I stress to you — and I am in charge of the Awqaf and Guidance Ministry, which supervises the mosques and some Islamic establishments in Yemen — that the extremism and terrorism phenomenon has no future in our country, because there is nothing to justify it: no oppression, tyranny, or war against Islam or the shari'ah, in contrast with what has happened in some countries. Besides, we have no religious or ethnic groups.

[Al-Harazi] What about the disagreement that broke out between the YRG and the General People's Congress (the two parties to the government coalition) over the decisions concerning the second stage of the recent economic, financial, and administrative reforms?

[Al-Qurashi] In my capacity as a member of the government I would like to assure you and the readers of AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in the country and abroad that what was reported about a disagreement was exaggerated and did not reflect the true picture. The disagreement was not over the need for economic reforms. It was over how and when to implement the required reforms and tackle their potential effects.

You now know that this disagreement ended with an agreement between the two parties to the coalition to cooperate to make the process a success, because it concerns all parties, and indeed every Yemeni citizen. In my view, it is healthy to differ, but the disagreement is now over. [passage omitted]

Yemen Signs Oil Agreement With U.S. Companies

JN0102211996 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] An joint-venture agreement on the Republic of Yemen's liquid gas project was signed at the Ministry of Industry, Oil, and Mineral Resources yesterday.

According to the agreement, the U.S. companies Hunt and Exxon, in addition to the Korean company Yung, will participate in the liquid gas project within the framework of the Yemeni Liquid Gas Corporation and

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Law No. 1 on the Gas Development Agreement of 1996. [passage omitted]

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', Dr. Muhammad Sa'id al-'Attar, deputy prime minister and minister of industry, oil, and mineral resources, pointed out that according to the agreement, the Hunt-Exxon group will hold 38 percent of the project's shares, the Total Company will hold 36 percent of the shares, and the government will hold 26 percent of the shares.

Al-'Attar said that $3.2 billion has been invested in the project. Production will begin in the year 2001, with a capacity of 5 million tonnes of liquid gas. He said that the state's revenue from the project is expected to total $700 million per year. The minister stressed that this is one of the giant economic projects that will strongly support the national economy and employ a large number of local workers.

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Baghdad Incident Highlights 'State of Disintegration'

MM0102162896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 1 Feb 96 p 17

[Report by Khayrallah Khayrallah: "Iraq...and the Only Game"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It is no secret that the situation in Iraq could explode from within at any moment, and that the uprising the country experienced in 1991 could be repeated. Even if we assume that what is happening in southern Iraq is normal in the light of the central authority's relative control of this region — and this control does not go beyond the major residential areas, since parts of the countryside there are now like "liberated" areas that do not belong to Baghdad — what prompts questions is the situation inside the Iraqi capital itself. The incident involving the Tikrit governor's son, who was a pilot with the rank of captain, in a district that is supposed to be exclusive and inhabited by senior Iraqi officials prompts more than one question about the extent of the regime's control of what is happening in Baghdad itself.

The Tikrit governor's son is no ordinary person, since he belongs to the ruling family. He was found dead — murdered in mysterious circumstances — inside his car in a district that is supposed to be protected by the regime. If the opposition has infiltrated this district, it means that the situation in the capital is serious. And if it is to do with attempts to settle scores within the regime, the situation is even more serious. It could simply be said that this crime reflects a state of disintegration that will be difficult to remedy in view of the continued refusal to acknowledge that the country needs to be rescued from a civil war that could actually lead to Iraq's partition.

In this context it certainly seems that the calls for reconciliation with Damascus are useful, because Damascus has a real interest in safeguarding Iraq's unity. It was no coincidence that President Hafiz al-Asad made more than one appeal to President Saddam Husayn before the war to liberate Kuwait, in order to avert the war and complete Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait before it was too late. The question should be: Is this the correct timing for Iraqi calls for reconciliation with Syria, or is the Iraqi attempt to open up to Syria too late, like the other steps the regime has embarked on since the adoption of the first Security Council resolution after the Kuwait invasion adventure? Did Baghdad not learn anything from the role Iran played in southern Iraq after the liberation of Kuwait and the Iraqi Army's retreat into the country? The Iraqi regime should realize, especially in the light of current domestic conditions, that the only game available to it now is the Resolution 986 game. The regime must implement this resolution in a good spirit and sincerely. It is futile to settle domestic scores or to try to play the Syrian card or rediscover Iranian policy. The regime has no option but to try its luck with Resolution 986 and to try to surmount the obstacles the U.S. Administration may place in its way to prevent it from being seen as implementing the resolution. The situation cannot tolerate any kind of maneuvering or the belief that there is something better than what is offered by Resolution 986, whose implementation would be a mercy for the Iraqi people and would safeguard Iraq's unity, even if it seems that the resolution contains terms that are not in the interests of the country's unity. The country is already partitioned, whether the regime likes it or not. And the "oil-for-food" resolution is a preliminary and practical step toward enabling it to restore its unity. This step must be taken even if the regime believes it is "unjust"!

Iraqi Envoy Leaves for New York To Lead Talks With UN

JN0102191096 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, Iraq's UNESCO representative, left for New York today to lead Iraq's delegation to the talks with the United Nations on selling oil for food and medicine. The talks are scheduled to begin in New York next Tuesday.

Iraq's al-Bakr Oil Terminal Prepared To Resume Oil Exports

JN0102200296 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Oil workers in al-Basrah Governorate have conducted several successful tests at al-Bakr oil terminal. The terminal is one of the key projects in Iraq. All of the phases to rebuild it and restore it to what it was before the aggression have been completed. The terminal has the capacity to handle 1.6 million barrels per day.

An IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent for in al-Basrah said workers at the South Oil Company pumped some oil into the al-Faw warehouses, which supply the port with oil. The oil was then pumped through large pipes. This experiment was a step toward the resumption filling tankers with oil once the orders are issued.

The terminal has some unique features that make it one of the most important oil terminals in the world, in view of its large oil transportation capacity and high export

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capacity. It is operated by a precise electronic system and all of its devices use electrical power generated by turbine engines.

Ships Containing Food, Medical Supplies Arrive at Iraqi Port

JN0102191296 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at the Trade Ministry said a ship containing 26,500 tonnes of wheat arrived in the country. The shipment was sent by sisterly Algeria. In addition, a United Arab Emirates [UAE] ship, Sundus, anchored at Umm Qasr Port in al-Basrah Governorate today. The ship contains more than 4,000 tonnes of food and medical supplies — a gift from the UAE to the people of Iraq.

An IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in the governorate said workers at Umm Qasr Port have started unloading the two ships.

Iraqi Trade Ministry Continues To Offer Supplies 'at Low Prices'

JN0102202296 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] For the fifth consecutive day, the Trade Ministry has continued to offer large quantities of foodstuffs and other items at low prices at the Baghdad International Fair and at central consumer societies and markets in Baghdad and the governorates.

There is a large amoun[illegible]lard, rice, tea, building materials, spare car parts, and electrical home appliances. Citizens had largely stopped buying these items. They are now buying as much as they need, but not in large amounts, because they are available all the time and because citizens understand the daily market traffic. In addition, there has been a large drop in prices, and citizens are confident of the state's ability to provide food supplies and other necessary items at reduced prices.

'Positive Response' Expected to Saddam's Pan-Arab Call

JN0202212696 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 28 Jan 96 p 3

[Column by Diya' Hasan: "The Significance of Iraq Extending Its Hand"]

[FBIS Translated Text] I was reviewing the recent speech by leader Saddam Husayn, in which he extended the hand of reconciliation and called for rising above past wounds and letting bygones be bygones, regardless of previous differences. This is a noble call that I believe will be met with a positive response from other Arabs and will help them abandon their narrow interests.

Responding to Iraq's responsible pan-Arab call will fulfill the aspirations of all Arabs at this difficult time. Those who respond to this call will be eager to heal the rift and to mobilize pan-Arab resources at the right time and place. It would not be strange if a brotherly and effective response came from Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Egypt. The same response is also expected from Sudan, Palestine, Yemen, Libya, and the rest of the Arab Maghreb countries. It is also not unlikely that Syria will respond to this call, since Iraq represents, historically, Syria's strategic depth. The Syrians know this very well and know that Iraq is an indispensable source of strength that can promote the well-being of Arabs and enable them to make their own decisions.

Iraqi Paper Hails Former French Minister's Report on Blockade

JN0202104096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0830 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 2 Feb (INA)—An Iraqi newspaper described the report presented to the French National Assembly by former French Foreign Minister Jean-Bernard Raimond as a demonstration of a neutral and objective political argument.

In an editorial today, AL-THAWRAH said the language of the report did not try to win sympathy in order to get support for the Iraqi cause. Though the report tackled the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the blockade, it did so in an unbiased and practical political language and presented realistic proposals that can be applied.

The newspaper added that the proposals of the former French foreign minister are an important development of the Western understanding of the Iraqi cause and the serious injustice done to it. The report also discussed what should be done to give Iraq its right by lifting the siege. This can clearly be seen in Raimond's call for gradual lifting of the blockade, and his call on the French Government to view the issues related to Iraq in an objective manner that may halt or reduce the dishonest political objectives which the United States used to practice to perpetuate the siege.

The newspaper added that such a position will provide France with strong pillars of an influential role in the region after wining the Arabs' confidence because it would be the first Western country to deal with the Iraqi question honestly, neutrally, and objectively.

Concluding its commentary, the newspaper said: The mere emphasis by Raimond that lifting the blockade

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is inevitable in the long run represents in itself a recognition that things are coming to an end.

It emphasized that the report and the proposals it included are a sign of the failure of the U.S. efforts to keep the siege and the tribulation it causes to the Iraqis away from criticism and outside the international political and media priorities.

Iraqi Paper Urges Iran To Build Ties of Neighborliness

JN0102184096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0715 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 1 Feb (INA) — An Iraqi paper says the Iranian regime should reconsider its position, end its hesitation, abandon the mentality of maneuvering, and begin a serious political dialogue with Iraq to build ties of neighborliness based on mutual respect for sovereignty, noninterference in domestic affairs, and recognition of the legitimate rights of both parties.

In an article today, AL-THAWRAH, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says that Iraq's renewed call to the Iranian regime to bury the past provides another opportunity for the Tehran regime if it is truly concerned about the genuine interests of the Iranian peoples.

The paper stresses that discussing Iran's credibility with regard to resolving the issues between the two countries, chief among which are humanitarian issues, and to restoring confidence between the two countries is a futile and meaningless effort, because the Iranian regime is holding more than 20,000 Iraqi POW's. Iraq released all Iranian POW's in 1990.

AL-THAWRAH says: While reaffirming its adherence to the need for calm dialogue to enter into serious political discussions on burying the past, Iraq is also emphasizing the need for openness, truthfulness, and, above all, sincere intentions to translate this desire into practice so that the discussions will not turn into a useless conversation among deaf participants.

The paper adds: But when the Iranian regime uses the ties between the two countries to haggle over its domestic and foreign crises with this or that international party, we believe it demonstrates the peak of political opportunism. We believe such a position does not serve the normalization of ties, because it is no more than maneuvering and games played at the expense the real interests of the Iranian people and at the expense of regional security, peace, and stability.

The paper urges the Iranian regime to abandon its course in order to improve ties and cleanse the atmosphere. The paper also urges Iran to stop wasting its opportunities on its failed hostile course against Iraq and damaging its national unity in a manner that harms relations between the two countries.

Iraq on Tuesday renewed its call for Iran to stop its hesitation and maneuvering and to follow an objective and serious course in order to establish ties of neighborliness between the two countries based on mutual respect for sovereignty, noninterference in domestic affairs, and recognition of the legitimate rights of both parties.

Opposition Reports Attack on Iraqi Republican Guards Officer

NC0102180296 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The commander of the Republican Guards' al-Faruq forces suffered serious wounds when he came under an armed attack as he drove his private vehicle, with several other officers, in the Himrin district of the Karkuk Governorate on 10 January 1996.

Citing its sources inside Iraq, the AL-SHAHADAH newspaper said one of the officers accompanying the commander was killed and another wounded in the attack. After the attack, the paper added, the Republican Guards and security forces arrested a large number of youths, mostly from the Bayyat and [word indistinct] tribes.

The paper said the attack was part of the people's new operations against the tyrant's forces involved in terrorist attacks on innocent citizens.

The Bayyat and [word indistinct] tribes fought bloody battles with the al-Faruq forces last month during which a large number of people were killed on both sides.

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Israeli Prime Minister Says Referendum To Be Held; Segev Opposes Withdrawal

TA0102193396 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In London today, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that a referendum on the Golan issue will be held even if an agreement is attained with Syria after the Knesset elections. The prime minister is leaving London for Davos tomorrow. [passage omitted]

While in Washington today, Energy Minister Gonen Segev said he would vote against a peace agreement with Syria that entails getting off the Golan Heights. He said that it is impossible to abstain on this issue; a vote must be cast either for or against, and he would vote against, if such an agreement is brought to a vote. This was reported by our correspondent in Washington Ya'aqov Ahime'ir, who adds that Segev, speaking to Israeli reporters, said that as a cabinet minister he sometimes knows less than certain reporters about Israeli-Syrian contacts.

Israel's Baraq Explains Referendum, Golan Security Arrangements

TA0202070296 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq said last night that the need for a separate referendum stems from the uncertainty of the prospects of achieving a draft agreement with Syria by the elections, an agreement to which the nation can refer when voting.

[Begin Baraq recording] If there is no peace agreement by election time, it will be achieved after the elections, if possible. And since we promised in advance to bring it to the people for a decision in any event, it will be brought before the people in a referendum if it is achieved after the elections. [end recording]

Minister Baraq reiterated that the election date should not be linked to the negotiations with Syria, because such a link is liable to give the Syrians an edge. Baraq made these remarks in a meeting with Labor Party youths, whom he also briefed very extensively on the security arrangements that Israel is seeking. Our correspondent Li'at Hamenahem was there:

[Begin recording] [Hamenahem] Some 250 teenagers greeted Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq enthusiastically as he walked into the auditorium. Their unmistakable support was manifested throughout Baraq's speech, which was repeatedly interrupted by applause.

The latest round of Maryland talks ended favorably, the foreign minister informed his audience. Progress was made on the issues of normalization and the comprehensive nature of negotiations, and even on water and the security arrangements. He added: We look to make sure that the security arrangements concur with three requirements:

[Baraq] To make a surprise attack on the State of Israel practically impossible; to greatly reduce both parties' motivation to launch a comprehensive war; and to prevent a situation in which daily incidents could deteriorate into a comprehensive conflict.

[Hamenahem] A Tiberias girl asked the foreign minister how he will be able to guarantee her safety in the event of a full withdrawal from the Golan. Radiating good will, Baraq described the future security arrangements in detail:

[Baraq] Demilitarized areas; areas with thinned-out troops; checks by reciprocal teams of inspectors; officers from both sides visiting with each other; early announcements about upcoming exercises; mutual invitations to exercises; distribution of satellite photographs and aerial photographs to both parties; early warning measures at stations deployed in locations as stipulated by the agreement; and a system of observers that will help this entire thing happen and that will be a trustee for both parties.

[Hamenahem] Baraq stressed: Whatever happens, a total elimination of risks is impossible. We will take a calculated risk, because the outcome is worth the price. [end recording]

Israel's Ramon: Referendum, Not Elections To Decide Golan Withdrawal

TA0102162296 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Report by Li'at Hamenahem on a session of the Labor Party's Hakfar Hayaroq circle on 1 February]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has serious hesitations about announcing early elections, Interior Minister Hayim Ramon said today. He specified the reasons: Peres realizes that he needs a viable popular mandate for the government's policies, but he also strives to make full use of every available day for negotiations with the Syrians. In any event, there are genuine prospects for early elections, Ramon said. Hagay Merom, chairman of the Hakfar Hayaroq circle, whispered at this point: There is a definite prospect. Ramon laughed, but stressed: Peres has not decided as yet. [passage omitted]

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Then Ramon surprised his audience: Even if early elections are held, the mandate for the negotiations with Syria will have to be received separately in a national referendum, without any connection to the elections.

[Begin Ramon recording] There is a sizable portion of the public that wants to say yes to Peres and to Labor, but it has a problem with the Golan, and we must not force it to vote against Peres and Labor. [end recording]

According to Ramon, progress was achieved in the two recent rounds of talks in Maryland, but not in every sphere.

[Begin Ramon recording] Some very, very significant progress was made in issues related to the overall arrangement, the substance of peace, and economic projects. In other issues, there are still big gaps and only little or no progress was made. These are the issues of borders, security arrangements, and water. [end recording]

Ramon concludes his address with remarks on a possible Peres-al- Asad summit. The Syrians, Ramon says, demand that Israel announce full withdrawal from the Golan, in return for which they will approve such an encounter. He stresses: We do not agree to do that.

Jordanian Envoy to Israel: Syrian Army on Golan 'Preferable' for Peace

TA0102175096 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, the Jordanian ambassador to Israel, said today that Jordan believes the deployment of Syrian troops on the Golan Heights is preferable. Our correspondent Uri Gordon heard him:

[Begin al-Mu'ashshir recording, in English] Syrian troops on the Golan means peace in the whole area. This is not a question of military power anymore. We want all the peoples in the area to enjoy peace, and if we do indeed want that, then it is better for all the parties — Israel included — if Syrian troops are on the Golan. [end recording]

Israel's Peres Says Early Elections Depend on 'Economic Issues'

TA0202065496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal accompanying Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in London]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shim'on Peres is doing his best to dissociate the Golan issue from the impending election campaign. Last night in London he said that withdrawal from the Golan resulting from a peace agreement with Syria will be decided in a referendum, even if it is achieved after the elections.

[Begin Peres recording] If we get a peace agreement with Syria that stipulates a territorial change, we will ask the people, even if it is after the elections. [end recording]

Peres' remarks indicate that he does not believe the negotiations can be concluded before the elections, even if they are held in October as scheduled.

The security issue will be a key factor, but the talks on security have made no progress to date. And yet Peres says that progress has been made in Maryland, and that negotiations on the core on the matter have been launched with the Syrians.

Peres presents a proposal made by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, aiming to include additional Arab states in the peace circle.

[Begin Peres recording] It was a very attractive proposal saying that countries prepared to join the peace process will become associate members of the EEC. [end recording]

Referring to the Israeli elections, which are closely linked to the negotiations with Syria — although Peres is trying to separate the two issues — Peres said they depend on economic issues and hard decisions about the economy he has to make. This means that the decision on early elections depends, among other things, on the economic plan to which the prime minister alludes.

This morning Peres will leave for Davos, Switzerland, where he will attend an international economic forum.

Christopher Telephones Israel's Peres on Nonintervention in Elections

TA0202115296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Report by political correspondent Shlomo Raz accompanying Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in Europe, in Switzerland — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Shim'on Peres has shared with us some details of his conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher which indicate that, despite everything, the Americans link the Israeli elections, which are expected to be held earlier than scheduled, with the political process. [sentence as heard] Let us listen to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' remarks on the issue:

[Begin Peres recording] Christopher called me yesterday, and we had a rather long conversation. He told me

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the United States has absolutely no intention of intervening in the matter of elections. I told him there is no connection, and there will be no connection between the elections and the political process. [end recording]

In his subsequent remarks, Peres heaped a lot of praise on Warren Christopher's efforts for peace and the fact that all his past and future visits work to promote the Israeli-Syrian negotiations.

And yet, although the Americans previously indicated in various ways that they would prefer that the Israeli elections be held as scheduled in order to avoid disrupting the negotiations with Syria, they have now announced in the most authoritative and official manner that they have no stand on the issue. This may be another indirect implication that the elections are at hand.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew carries a related report from Europe by political correspondent Udi Segal, who adds: "Peres announced today that his election campaign will focus on the aspiration to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement in the Middle East.

["Meanwhile, Peres is trying to discuss the price of peace — withdrawal — as little as possible. I think that starting the discussions with the Syrians on the territorial issue is a mistake, Peres said during the flight from London to Switzerland."]

Israel Dissociates Syria Track From Elections Following U.S. 'Pressure'

TA0202080496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Following pressure exerted by the United States, the government has explained that the Syrian negotiations will not be the reason for bringing the elections forward. The Americans insisted that Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region should not be used as a rationale for this domestic move.

Meanwhile, the Labor Party continues deliberating on the rationale to be given to the public if early elections are announced. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel reports:

[Deqel] [passage omitted] A consensus is emerging in Labor on holding the general elections on Tuesday, 28 May, with the second premiership round on 18 June, two days before schools start summer vacation.

Israel's Netanyahu Says Labor Seeks Elections Due to Drop in Polls

TA0202115396 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 2 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Sarah Honig]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres "wants to reschedule the elections because he is worried by the narrowing gap in the polls," Likud chairman Binyamin Netanyahu said yesterday.

Peres has been leading by an average of 20 percent ever since Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination. Prior to that Netanyahu had a narrow lead over Rabin.

"Peres is worried, and I can see why," Netanyahu said. "No matter when elections are held, be it in June or October, the Likud will win — and he knows it. Peres had initially promised not to exploit the assassination, but it now appears that he is in a rush precisely in order to effect a political hijacking and maximize the boost Labor got after the assassination. In any event, the Likud will discuss its stand on the date of elections."

The Likud's executive bureau, however, did not take up the issue in its session last night, which Netanyahu did not attend. The meeting was largely devoted to the Likud's dilemma over updating its platform without abandoning its ideology.

Bureau chairman MK [Knesset Member] 'Uzi Landau argued that "as things stand now, there is no question of us dealing with (PLO Chairman Yasir) 'Arafat because he simply has not recognized Israel's right to exist. He has been toying with us for two-and-a-half years. His rhetoric is one of incitement, and he has failed to amend the Palestine Covenant or to hand over terrorists. The Oslo accords are being violated by the PLO, and a Likud government will not stand for it."

But other notes were also struck at the meeting, with MK 'Ovadya Eli asserting that "agreements signed by one government must be honored by the governments which follow it. We will not ignore the Oslo agreement.

"The question is not whether to talk to 'Arafat, but under what conditions to talk, about what to talk, and how to handle the negotiations. The Likud will do so far better than Labor, and with less irresponsibility as far as Israel's vital interests are involved."

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Israel Criticizes U.S. Ambassador Over Stand on DFLP

TA0202120196 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 2 Feb 96 p 2

[Report by Moshe Zak: "Ambassador's Error"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] American Ambassador Martin Indyk was wrong. In a lecture at the Tel Aviv Rotary Club, he said the DFLP [Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine] leader Nayif Hawatimah, by his willingness to come to Gaza is sending a message that "he is attempting to accommodate himself to the evolving coexistence in the region."

This is an error, both from the historical and conceptual perspectives. Hawatimah's statements do not contain messages to Israel. He has said exactly the same in the past, and to this day he stands firmly for the continuation of the armed struggle.

To err is human, and ambassadors are human. But Indyk is not just a diplomat. He is also a scholar of Middle East affairs, and he is well aware that Hawatimah holds the copyright on the notion of "establishing a Palestinian national entity in the West Bank and Gaza." He advanced the idea more than 20 years ago and there is no reason why he should not want to be a part of it when it comes into being.

In 1974, Hawatimah was the first to raise the idea of a Palestinian national authority in the West Bank and Gaza, an idea which was later accepted by the PLO as a transitional stage to the whole of Palestine. his idea of a Palestinian authority is not a product of the present peace process under US guidance, but of the Soviet line at that time.

This rhetoric did not prevent Hawatimah's organization from carrying on the armed struggle against Israel. In that very year it carried out murderous attacks in Ma'alot, Bet She'an, and Jerusalem. Hawatimah still does not dissociate himself from the armed struggle; he is only prepared to say that he will not harm civilians, only soldiers.

Israelis who are not familiar with Hawatimah's dialectic may be impressed by his statement against "a slaughter of the innocents," but Indyk knows that Hawatimah reserves the right to decide who is "innocent." And as far as he is concerned, the terrorist from Janin who fatally stabbed S/Sgt. Ehud Tal in the Dotan camp on Tuesday is innocent.

Indyk's assertion that even the extremists among the Palestinians accept Israel's existence was apparently meant to bolster that misconception of the Israelis responsible for Oslo — that the Palestinians are relinquishing their dream of the whole of Palestine.

On this basis, the transfer of the terrorists' command post from Damascus to Gaza is understood as a positive step, for now the commanders can, in theory, vote in the Palestinian National Council in favor of the changes to the Palestinian Covenant promised by Yasir 'Arafat.

On this model of creaky justification, it may be claimed that the thousands of terrorists due to arrive in police uniform from Libya and Lebanon are 'Arafat's faithful supporters, and will strengthen the forces that will foil attempts at terrorism.

According to this erroneous formulation, the agreement between 'Arafat and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] to suspend terrorist operations in Israel until after the Knesset elections can be explained as a step toward peace. In fact, it is a temporary cease- fire which will allow 'Arafat to gain all the territory promised him in Oslo 2, and will guarantee future coordination between the negotiations conducted by the Palestinian Authority and Hamas operations. Then both will be able to squeeze as many concessions as possible out of the negotiations for the permanent agreement.

Many Israelis, and many Americans, are trying to perceive the Oslo agreement as the "end of history," in other words, the end of the ideological era. This may be its effect in Israeli society, which is now so excited by pragmatic solutions that it is letting go of the ideologies which directed it through 100 years of Zionism.

This Israeli U-turn has won the applause of foreign professors and diplomats, who at the same time have expressed their understanding of the motives of Palestinian society, as reflected in the PLO and its affiliated organizations. Foreign observers are impressed by the pragmatic image Israel has given Palestinian institutions to help them raise the funds the PA needs.

In point of fact, one would have to search long and hard to find any change of ideology on the Palestinian side, apart from the step- by-step strategy set forth in 1974.

Careful examination of 'Arafat's views reveals traces of the step-by step approach present at the very beginning of his career. The base 'Arafat has now established in the territories under the guise of "Palestinian forces" marks the realization of a dream from before 1967 when 'Arafat talked about involving Arab countries in a war to bring about the occupation of the West Bank by Israel and its transformation into a base for a popular war against Israel.

The Israeli authorities managed to frustrate the immediate implementation of 'Arafat's plan. The terrorist com-

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mand posts were forced over the border into Jordan. From there they fled to Lebanon. Israel caused 'Arafat's expulsion from Beirut, and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad forced his expulsion from Tripoli.

Now 'Arafat has brought the wheel round full circle. He is bringing Fatah terrorists back from Libya and Lebanon to their bases in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, and made Israel permit the command posts of the naval organizations to move into Gaza.

He is willing to pay the price for this by speaking out in favor of coexistence, without straying from his insistence that Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine, and that Palestinians have the right of return.

The calm prevailing in Israel is a hostage in Hamas's hands. It depends on their keeping their promise to 'Arafat until after the Knesset elections.

'Spy' for Iran Says Israeli Charges 'Misunderstanding'

TA0202075596 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Muhammad Salama, who was suspected of spying for Iran and expelled to Jordan yesterday, explained in an telephone interview with IDF Radio from Jordan this morning that he was merely collecting maps for a friend, who was planning to open a tourist agency.

Salama, who is a Palestine National Council [PNC] member, added that he plans to attend the PNC convention due to take place soon. Our correspondent Hanan Schlein spoke with him:

[Schlein] Suspected Iranian spy Muhammad Salama's friends charge that his Fatah rivals falsely implicated him with the Israeli Shin Bet when he came to visit the territories three months ago. Salama prefers to view the wretched affair as a misunderstanding. Replying for the first time to charges that he passed material to the Iranians, he stresses: [passage omitted] The reports are untrue, these were just tourist maps, he said. A friend of mine, who wanted to open a tourist agency in Amman, asked me to find some material. I only took stuff on al-Aqsa, and I did not make any markings on the map or take photographs.

He denies any connection with Iran. [passage omitted] There have been no contacts between me and the Iranian Embassy. I was only in touch with a Pakistani businessman. I told the investigators that I was unable to distinguish the language spoken in Iran from that of Pakistan, and perhaps the man was really an Iranian.

In any event, PNC member Salama is looking toward the future and his next visit to the autonomy. He plans to attend the next PNC convention, and if necessary, he will appeal his deportation by Israel to the Supreme Court of Justice.

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Jordan's al-Kabariti Reportedly To Form New Government 'Soon'

JN0202095596 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 2 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman — AL-RA'Y — In a sudden development, confirmed reports said that His Majesty King Husayn has accepted the resignation of Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir and asked him to remain in office for a while. This dramatic step surprised government and popular quarters who believed that any cabinet reshuffle or change would not take place before 'Id al-Fitr [19 or 20 February]. These quarters also believed that Bin-Shakir would remain in office and that he would make a radical change in his cabinet to include relieving approximately 12 ministers described as "extra load." The quarters believe that the reputation of the cabinet was undermined recently.

Confirmed reports say that Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti will be asked to form the new government. It was reported earlier that either al-Kabariti or Zayd al-Rifa'i, member of the Senate, was being considered for the post of prime minister. However, all indications and very minimal contacts reveal that 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti will form the new government. [passage omitted]

[Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic on 2 February publishes on pages 1 and 20 a 500-word report noting that "informed sources told AL-DUSTUR that His Excellency al-Sharif Zayd will soon tender his resignation to his majesty the king." The report adds that "political sources believe that Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti will form the new cabinet."]

Jordanian Paper Cites 'Reliable Sources' on Government's Resignation

MM0202111896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 2 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat: "Jordanian Government Resigns, al-Kabariti Most Likely Candidate To Succeed Zayd Bin-Shakir"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman — AL-HAYAH learned from reliable Jordanian sources yesterday that Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir has submitted his government's resignation, paving the way for King Husayn to assign someone else to form a new government. The sources believe that Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti is likely to form the next government within a week or two at the most. Although the government's resignation has not been announced officially, sources close to the prime minister have said that he "has informed those close to him of his resignation." [passage omitted]

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Lebanese Hizballah Deputy on U.S. Envoy's 'Suspicious Statements'

NC0202075896 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Haj Muhammad Yaghi, the Hizballah official in charge of the al-Biqa' area, has told our radio of the significance of the great victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. He stressed that it was the dawn that lit the road for the oppressed in defending their rights. Speaking exclusively to Hani Fakhr-al-Din, Deputy Yaghi said:

[Begin recording] [passage omitted] I tell the U.S. ambassador who will come to Beirut soon that his suspicious statements, like those made by his predecessors, reflect the same tyrannic U.S. policy followed throughout the years. I reiterate that these basically false accusations are typical of the state terrorism that is practiced by the U.S. Administration, which today believes that it can impose its control over everyone and take charge of all the oppressed peoples' causes. But it will never achieve this. [end recording]

Deputy Yaghi pledged to Hizballah and the Islamic Revolution leadership, especially Khamene'i, to continue along the same course.

Lebanese Hizballah's Ra'd on Syria-Israel Developments

MM0102151496 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 28 Jan-3 Feb 96 p 30

[Interview with Deputy Muhammad Ra'd, head of Hizballah's Political Council in Lebanon, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-MAJALLAH] What are your views on the recent positive developments in the Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations and their possible outcome for moving forward the negotiation process between Lebanon and Israel?

[Ra'd] The negotiation process is not new to the region. This time, however, it is marked by U.S. effectiveness and an enthusiastic follow-up, which emerged particularly after the visible signs of the Soviet Union's imminent collapse, the United States' readiness to extend control over the region and benefit from its wealth, and its desire to interfere in its peoples' self- determination. Anyone wanting to pursue those two things must draw a new map of this region in order to achieve his aims. Since the Madrid conference, the obstacle was neither on the Palestinian, 'Arafat track, nor on the Jordanian track. Instead, this obstacle was confined to the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. After what happened on the Palestinian and Jordanian track, Israel turned its back on the Syrian track, and did not seem to care. It was then that the U.S. Administration made a move and succeeded in bringing the Syrians and the Israelis back to the negotiations table, bringing together the two countries' chiefs of staff, but without reaching a solution to the main problem, which led to the freezing of this track.

And then there was Israeli Premier Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination, with Shim'on Peres, the foreign minister, succeeding him as the head of government. Peres is known as the proponent of the Middle East settlement plan, and it is natural that he should make every effort to accomplish his dream. This new situation has coincided with increasing U.S. concern that others involved in the Middle East crisis could be assassination targets. That is why the U.S. Administration hastened to press Shim'on Peres to make positive proposals with regard to the Syrian-Israeli track, and perhaps agreed to market these proposals inside the Zionist entity.

Hence, the unusual interest of the United States in encouraging the Syrian-Israeli track should be viewed from this angle, in addition to its keenness to back Peres' Labor party, and support it against Zionist opposition to the peaceful settlement. The implicit pledge given to U.S. President Bill Clinton by Shim'on Peres during his recent visit to Washington finally brought about movement on the Syrian-Israeli negotiation track, whereby Israel would announce its determination to withdraw to the 4 June borders, as required by the Syrian negotiator, before any further details are discussed.

This, however, does not mean that the Syrian-Israeli negotiations are on the verge of reaching a final solution. The fundamental issues have been dealt with but there still remain some obstacles which could hamper the negotiation process, if for example one team insists on a point that may not seem important to the other.

In addition, we are saying that there could be a Syrian-Israeli agreement if the former can secure a peace that is more than just a normal peace, and we are neither optimistic nor pessimistic in this regard.

[AL-MAJALLAH] The Syrians seem to be using a new language which we have not encountered before, such as Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' saying that there is the intention to reduce military operations in the south, and criticizing Israeli shelling of civilians and the resistance's retaliatory Katyusha attacks....

[Ra'd] We view the comments by Minister al-Shar' as no more than a new Syrian pledge to comply with the so- called "25 July understanding." We do not consider it a call to calm down the front in the south. We understand from the comments of Minister al-Shar' that he is reaffirming Syria's commitment to what was

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agreed in the so-called "25 July understanding," namely that the reason for the escalation is Israel's shelling of peaceful villages and civilians, a matter which calls for the resistance's retaliatory shelling of settlements in northern Israel.

On our side, we are aware of the developments to deal with some of the obstacles on the negotiations track. These developments do not encourage the Syrian negotiator to silence the southern front until the complete removal of the Zionist occupation. This is natural, in view of the fact that the resistance is the result of the occupation and not the reason for it.

[AL-MAJALLAH] If Syria and Lebanon reach a peace agreement with Israel, the resistance will no longer be needed. How do you intend to deal with this situation?

[Ra'd] We are following the developments very closely. When we started the resistance, we did it to force the Israeli enemy to unconditionally withdraw from our occupied land. This objective will not be achieved at the negotiating table, but through the resistance's operations and effectiveness. We are not saying this to deceive anyone but as a statement of fact, lest anyone forget later.

As to how we will cope with the new developments and the new phase, we are ready for both in a way that safeguards our achievements and our people's interests. We do not have to show our cards, at least for now, with regard to the way we shall deal with the new situation. This is what we have been saying for the last two years and every time we have been asked this question.

[AL-MAJALLAH] However, there is talk of the possibility of a clash between the armed resistance and the Lebanese authorities during the negotiations.

[Ra'd] This is the product of fiction and imagination, and of some people's wishful thinking for such infighting to take place. However, there is no reason for it. The resistance in Lebanon is not a group of mercenaries, but the conscious choice of all the Lebanese and their desire and hope that the Israeli occupation be removed from their territory. The resistance is a popular choice and not that of a military group which came to Lebanon to fight against the will of the Lebanese.

We do not see any conflict, neither now nor in the future, between the resistance and the Lebanese authorities. The Lebanese Army understands our resistance and we are constantly coordinating with it, particularly on some security issues and with regard to those collaborating with the Israeli enemy. This coordination and cooperation will not be harmed at all after the resistance achieves a complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon.

We clearly state that the resistance does not see itself as a security organ replacing the Lebanese Army. We did not do that in the past and neither will we in the future.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Will you be cooperating with the Lebanese authorities when they decide to confiscate Hizballah's weapons?

[Ra'd] This matter will be dealt with in such a way as to guarantee our people's security and interests without the need for any decrees or suggestions. We want to reaffirm that we will not be competing with the authorities for roles, and I do not believe that any of us will put himself in that position.

[AL-MAJALLAH] It has been noticed that relations between Syria and Hizballah have cooled down. Would you care to comment?

[Ra'd] Apart from our reservations on the principle of negotiation, we understand precisely the Syrian position and approach in the negotiations. Our relations with Syria are strategic, based on our understanding of Syria's regional and local role and Syria's position in the Arab and Islamic world. This understanding also reaffirms the relations between Syria and the Islamic Republic of Iran. These relations are based on strategic — I am not saying religious — foundations which take into consideration the interests of the Arab region's advocates of Arabism and Islamists. There is an Iranian fundamentalist understanding of President Hafiz al-Asad's nationalist view of the situation. There is also a Syrian understanding of Tehran's Islamist view of the situation.

[AL-MAJALLAH] If we go back to the internal situation, we notice that there is currently a "honeymoon period" between the Lebanese authorities and the group supporting the resistance and representing Hizballah in the chamber of deputies, which was apparent in your support for extending President Ilyas al-Hirawi's presidency and your constant meetings with Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, and last but not least, the reports concerning the state's decision to grant Hizballah a television station out of the six which will remain, once the law on audio-visual media has been passed.

[Ra'd] We have not had the honeymoon yet (he laughs) and we hope that we will not have a rotten time with the state.

The regional situation has given us two options: Either we are with the Arab position of steadfastness toward Israel or we adopt a position that would weaken this position. We, of course, have chosen the position of confrontation with Israel.

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[AL-MAJALLAH] Do you have any complaints about the authorities?

[Ra'd] I do not wish to broach the subject, because I want to avoid a media row. Yes, we do have some criticism of the government in general and its performance, and we are discussing these points with all the government's departments.

[AL-MAJALLAH] How would you characterize your relations with the prime minister?

[Ra'd] At present, relations seem to focus on dealing with the issues, but on the basis of adhering to the oppositionist stand toward the government, in view of its policy. We have detected some understanding for many issues but we have not shifted from our oppositionist stand, and we are conducting a dialogue with Prime Minister al-Hariri in this context.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Albeit quietly...

[Ra'd] No, not quietly, and not because things are going well.... Frankly, I would say that the political climate in the country is in a state of stagnation.

[AL-MAJALLAH] During the past weeks there has been a government move toward the closure of some religious associations accused of sedition, preceded by a deployment of security forces all over Lebanese territory and the arrest of any suspect to be referred to justice. This was followed by the siege of the Ayn-al-Hulwah Palestinian camp after it transpired that Abu-Mihjin, the suspect in the assassination of Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi, former head of the Islamic Charity Projects Society (al-Ahbash), was hiding there. Would you care to comment on the events of recent days?

[Ra'd] First, we must differentiate between chasing a murder suspect and government measures aimed at a group of Lebanese, be they Islamists or non-Islamists. We support all security measures aimed at reinforcing security in the country. However, we ask the state to make absolutely certain that it does not open a Pandora's box before undertaking measures as a result of chasing those involved in a crime, attack, or similar.

We will not expand on this view and will limit ourselves to recording some official reactions by the authorities, bearing in mind that these reactions will not achieve any result.

[AL-MAJALLAH] How do you explain the timing for inviting Palestinian fighters from the Ayn-al-Hulwah camp to join the Palestinian police in Gaza and the Lebanese measures undertaken at the camp and the attempt to capture Abu-Mihjin who was hiding there?

[Ra'd] (laughing) It seems that Yasir 'Arafat needed voters for the self-rule authority elections.

Israeli Shelling, 'Resistance' Attack Reported in South Lebanon

NC0202122096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The outskirts of Habbush, the Habbush River basin, al-Wadi al-Akhdar, and the southern quarter of 'Arab Salim came under Israeli 120-mm artillery shelling at 0915 today. The enemy also used phosphorous bombs in the shelling and raked the areas with machine-gun fire.

Security reports indicated that the Resistance fighters attacked the Israeli enemy post in Tallat al-Suwayda' with rockets and machine guns. The Agent militia [South Lebanese Army] admitted that one of its members was wounded in the attack.

The Islamic Resistance claimed responsibility for this attack and said one of the Agents manning the post was killed.

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Syrian Vice President Hails 'Strategic' Ties With Iran

LD0202092996 Tehran IRNA in English 0710 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb. 2, IRNA — Syrian First Vice-President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam here Thursday said 12th Bahman (Feb. 1), the day when founder of the Islamic republic the late Imam Khomeyni arrived in Iran after 15 years in exile, would be recorded in world's history as an unforgettable day.

In a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Damascus Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Hasan Akhtari, Khaddam congratulated the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, and Muslim Iranian nation on the occasion.

The Syrian first vice-president termed as "growing and strategic" Tehran-Damascus ties.

The two sides also held talks on the upcoming visit to Syria of the Iranian first vice-president, Hasan Habibi.

Syrian Press Views Lack of Progress at Maryland Talks

JN0102152096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Responsibility For Making Peace," TISHRIN comments on the negotiations between the Syrian and Israeli delegations that ended in Maryland yesterday. The paper stresses that Syria has offered everything it can to ensure the success of the talks and to avoid the stalemate toward which the Israelis are trying to push the peace process.

TISHRIN says: Syria has sincerely and faithfully responded to all the steps, initiatives, and efforts that have sought to place the Syrian-Israeli track of the peace process on its correct, true path.

However, the paper adds, peace cannot be achieved by one party alone. It requires positive responses from the other side. It also requires all the parties involved in the peace process to pool their efforts. This has not happened, despite the fact that two rounds of talks have been held in Maryland.

TISHRIN explains that the Israeli negotiating team did not offer anything that would help the talks succeed. All the evidence shows that the Israelis have deviated in their ideas and positions from the resolutions of international legitimacy and their provisions and clauses. They have also deviated from the crucial and substantive issues. The negotiations continue to revolve around exploring positions and views. The gaps have remained wide. Israeli officials made it clear that Israel's offerings serve only its own interests and enable it to make gains at the expense of the security, sovereignty, rights, territory, and dignity of Syria and its people.

TISHRIN concludes by saying: The Israelis' attempt to evade the requirements of peace increases the existing obstacles and gaps. The Israelis' attempt to obstruct the peace process with Syria and their evasion of talks on a complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights to the 4 June 1967 lines do not serve the efforts to establish a just and comprehensive peace, nor do they help ensure the success of the efforts to achieve that peace. This means that Israel is responsible for delaying a peace agreement with Syria and for squandering the chances provided by the Maryland talks to expedite a breakthrough on the Syrian track.

AL-BA'TH blames Israel for not complying with the principles of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy. The paper says: The two-faced Israeli position led to certain consequences in the Maryland talks that did not have a positive impact and that damaged the hopes of removing the obstacles facing the talks. If, during the last two rounds of talks — which were devoted to discussing security arrangements, the Israeli side had abided by the principles governing these arrangements that were set in May 1995, it would have been possible to arrive at an agreement or semi-agreement on security arrangements. What happened, however, was an evasive attempt by the Israelis to avoid compliance with the unavoidable if peace is to be established.

AL-BA'TH says: Israel has previously been responsible for preventing the peace process from advancing and for the separate and partial agreements and their results. It is also totally responsible for everything that will result from the Peres government's avoidance of commitment to the principles of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy.

AL-BA'TH stresses that Syria has given a great deal to the peace process and is committed, and will continue to be committed, to that process in the future. However, Syria cannot provide cover for the enemies of peace.

AL-BA'TH concludes; When Secretary Christopher arrives in the region, he will see that Syria is giving peace a chance to progress and that Syria will be as it has always been. It does not yield to threats and does not surrender to injustice, tyranny, oppression, or challenges. Instead, Syria seeks to achieve a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees the interests and rights of all parties. Syria is looking forward to ending the state of war with eyes that long for peace — not like the other party, which talks about peace by using

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the language of war and addresses the issues of peace from the premise of preparing for war. The language of bargains and deals and double positions has never been in Syria's dictionary.

AL-THAWRAH discusses the same subject in its two commentaries. In the first commentary, the paper says: It seems that Israel has not yet decided on peace, despite all the propaganda machine's claims about its concern for time. Anyone who proposes anything short of complete withdrawal does not want peace to be achieved on the basis of justice or comprehensiveness or in accordance with the principles and resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace formula.

AL-THAWRAH says: Anyone who sticks to impossible conditions and provocative proposals regarding security arrangements and other issues does not really want the negotiations to advance, practically or objectively. Instead, he knows exactly what he wants and seeks to achieve it; that is, to obstruct progress and stall for time under the pretext of negotiations.

In a second commentary titled "Withdrawal Is the Road to Progress," AL-THAWRAH says: It is now certain that complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights is the basic pillar for peace in the Middle East. Undoubtedly, the Peres government knows that Syria's position on the issue of withdrawal is clear and well known and cannot change under any circumstance.

AL-THAWRAH concludes its second commentary by saying: Syria strongly believes that the road to peace begins with withdrawal, dismantling settlements, and evacuating the settlers to beyond the June [1967] lines. When all this is achieved, one can say that the peace process has started to achieve its objectives, as defined in the resolutions of international legitimacy, and that the region is truly ready to enter an age of peace, security, and stability.

Syrian Paper Hopes Christopher Brings 'Something New'

JN0202092196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0555 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary today, AL-THAWRAH discusses the fourth round of Maryland talks which ended without any change in the maneuvering Israeli position which rejects the basics of peace.

The newspaper refers to the statement made by the Israeli officials, headed by Foreign Minister Baraq, which showed Israeli rejection of the principles of peace represented in full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy and the U.S. initiative, and on the basis of equitable [mutaqafi'ah], balanced [mutawazinah], and equal [mutasawiyah] security arrangements on the two sides.

AL-THAWRAH says: When Baraq returns to emphasize the early- warning ground stations on the Golan, this means that Israel has begun to plant mines to harm the peace process again, and that the countdown has begun for the end of the optimism from the Maryland talks. Undoubtedly, all those who followed the Maryland talks are aware that when Israel believes that through such maneuvers and impossible conditions, accompanied by the talk about elections to take place on time as a pressure tactic through which it hopes to get concessions from Syria, it makes a serious mistake because Syria has a firm position not affected by time pressures or anything else.

The newspaper emphasizes that Syria will not accept anything other than comprehensive and just peace based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and which meets all requirements of full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon.

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: We in Syria have always emphasized the basics of peace, and we hope that U.S. Secretary of State Christopher will bring with him something new on his new tour of the region, and that he will force Israel to change its position so that it will respond to the requirements of real peace. We also hope that he will shift the peace talks from what was called the exploratory stage to the stage of field implementation of the principles of peace. We also hope that the United States will play the role of full partner which it has drawn for itself through rescuing the peace process and the U.S. initiative itself.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: A new round of Maryland talks on the Syrian-Israeli track ended yesterday like the other rounds — without real progress. The U.S. patronage and efforts were unable to bridge the wide gap separating the Syrian and Israeli peace positions and the security arrangements which Syria insists should be balanced and equitable, and should ensure the security and interests of all parties.

The newspaper says: So far, the Israeli leaders continue to attempt to bargain over the resolutions of international legitimacy through many maneuvering tactics that ignore the resolutions of international legitimacy and avoid any commitment, of any sort, to these resolutions. The Israeli leaders use the legitimate rights of others as pressuring and blackmailing cards to snatch concessions and impose their own concepts which call for peace in return for peace, not the peace of international legitimacy that calls for the return of land.

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AL-THAWRAH says: It is clear that the Israeli negotiators went to Maryland with the aim of torpedoing and aborting the talks. During the negotiations, they presented scores of conditions and impossible demands which they raised to embarrass and trap Syria, while they were aware in advance that these conditions are unequivocally rejected because they are far from the basics and pillars of just peace and because they undermine the security, dignity, and national sovereignty of Syria over all of its territories. These conditions and demands attempt to circumvent and deviate from what is essential.

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH emphasizes that Syria's peace position has not changed, and will not change, and that it has repeatedly said it is not in hurry, and it is not the party that relinquishes an iota of sand or bargains over a right. Syria will not accept anything less than the full return of land and rights.

In its editorial today, AL-BA'TH discusses the Maryland talks and the conflicting Israeli statements made by some Israeli officials, headed by Ehud Baraq. It says Baraq's statements brought the peace talks back to square one, as if these talks had not been held yet. Baraq and others have not only tried to complicate things and place new obstacles to the talks, but these Israeli officials have said in one way or another that the Maryland talks will not realize anything. This means that these officials decided the results of the talks before they began. Thus, they emphasize that they do not want any breakthroughs that help advance the peace process. If that was not the case, then why have they made these statements, which show that the Israeli officials continue to practice the policy of maneuvering and blackmailing? This means that they insist on getting everything without giving anything in return.

AL-BA'TH says: Syria did not demand anything outside the framework of international legitimacy and its resolutions. When Syria accepted the peace initiative, it did so clearly and accurately, and its acceptance was based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle. This means that this acceptance was the result of conviction on the contents of the peace initiative. Syria does not want anything other than to implement this initiative on the basis of its international terms of reference.

Concluding its editorial, AL-BA'TH says: Peace can be realized when Israel withdraws from the occupied Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967 and from southern Lebanon in accordance with Resolution 425. Short of this, the peace which Israel wants will definitely not come to light.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: 10 Killed in Taleban-Government Crossfire

LD0102161596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As a result of fighting in Kabul between government forces and the Taleban group, 17 people who were trying to carry foodstuffs and fuel to the city were killed or injured.

IRNA reported from Kabul that a source at Afghanistan's Defense Ministry said on 31 January that these people had intended to bring foodstuffs, fuel, and other essential goods to Kabul along the front line between the Taleban group and government forces. They were trapped in a crossfire, as a result of which 10 people were killed and seven others were injured.

Unidentified Jet Drops Four Bombs on Kabul

BK0102135996 Hong Kong AFP in English 1346 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, Feb 1 (AFP)—At least 12 people died when an unidentified jet dropped four bombs on Kabul Thursday [1 February], witnesses and hospital sources said.

Two bombs fell on Jaide Maiwan, which was one of Kabul's main avenues before it was destroyed during the civil war. Two other bombs fell on Tapa Salam in west Kabul, near the university. More than 10 other people were injured.

In the past, the Kabul government has accused the Taleban Islamic militia of carrying out such raids. The Taleban, who are entrenched on the hills south of Kabul, want to topple the regime of President Borhanoddin Rabbani and install a fully Islamic regime in Afghanistan.

Taleban Air Raid on Kabul Kills Over 10 People

LD0102192096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] More than 10 people lost their lives this afternoon as a result of bombing by jets of Benazir Bhutto's Taleban.

A BAKHTAR correspondent reported that this afternoon, at around 1600, two jets of the mercenary Taleban group dropped four 500-kg bombs on a residential area of the city in the vicinity of Pol-e Kheshti grand mosque [center of Kabul], killing over 10 people and injuring several others.

Kabul citizens who were busy buying essential goods toward the end of the day in the holy fasting month of Ramadan, or who were preparing to go home for fast-breaking after late afternoon prayers, were soiled with blood and dust. Bodies burned in the fire of the bombing and mutilated corpses could be seen everywhere on a city center road. [Words indistinct] The less badly wounded were cursing the Taleban. [Words indistinct]

The people of Kabul, outraged by the merciless Taleban's massacre, today staged a march in the vicinity of the presidential palace. They demanded that the authorities of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the international community should stop the barbaric actions of this mercenary group.

This march was staged by bicycle riders who daily bring foodstuffs and fuel from Chahar Asiab [to Kabul]. [Words indistinct] they condemned the Taleban attack (?on bicycle riders and other people) whereby 10 Kabul citizens who were engaged in bringing a quantity of foodstuffs for themselves were martyred. The marchers demanded that the mercenary Taleban should open the roads and stop firing on them.

An eyewitness said that yesterday, a man who had been carrying some petrol was captured by the Taleban. The Talebans poured the petrol over him and set him on fire in front of the people.

According to another report, as a result of rocket firing by the Taleban group on residential areas of the city, one Kabul citizen was martyred.

BAKHTAR reported that last night and today the Taleban group fired two rockets and a mortar bomb. As a result of the mortar bombing, one citizen of Kabul was martyred and another (?two) were injured.

Taleban Air Raid on Kabul Kills 14, Wounds 20

LD0102175096 Tehran IRNA in English 1732 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb. 1, IRNA — At least 14 people died and 20 others were wounded in Kabul on Thursday [1 February] afternoon when two Taleban warplanes bombarded the residential areas.

The warplanes dropped six bombs upon non-militay areas killing the Muslim people in Kabul who were observing the holy fasting month of Ramadan.

Eyewitnesses said the bombs targetted civilian people who were turning back from day-long working. They said the number of victims might go much higher.

Hospital sources said six of the those injured in the air attack were evacuated to Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital, 11 others to Jumhuriyat Hospital and several others were taken to the army's state hospital.

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This is the second time in one week that the Taleban warplanes launched the air raid.

On Monday the warplanes dropped three bombs upon Kabul.

Taleban Air Raid on Kabul TV Station Disrupts Broadcasting

LD0102205696 Tehran IRNA in English 2030 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb. 1, IRNA — An air raid on TV station located on the hilltop in Kabul disrupted the broadcasting of the program here Thursday [1 February].

Kabul TV station used to broadcast program from 1900 hrs to 2200 hrs. every day. Two Taleban fighters entered the airspace of the capital city and dropped six bombs, one of which hit the TV station.

However, it is not very clear whether the disruption of the program is due to the air raid on the station or some other factors. Neither did the government sources make any announcement in this relation nor did the radio do it at its 2030 hours news this evening.

The latest air raid has left 14 civilian dead and over 20 people wounded.

Iran

Iran FM Velayati Views Regional Cooperation

NC0102114696 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 18 Jan 96 p 11

[Article by Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati: "Regional Cooperation Ensures International Stability and Security"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Apart from the last years of the 20th century, all the other years in the second half of this century international relations were influenced by the Cold War, which cast its shadow over world politics. [passage omitted]

With the end of the Cold War, we have witnessed a change in the structure of international relations. Confrontation in the main arena of the Cold War—that is, Europe—has been replaced with cooperation, and Europe is no longer considered a dismembered continent. [passage omitted]

Although the improvement of international relations has, on the whole, had positive impacts in various parts of the world, instability, insecurity, and conflicts have also intensified in parallel. New conflicts have emerged, most of which do not appear to have a clear end. The sources for friction can be found everywhere. The military budgets of most countries have increased, and a large part of economic resources continue to be allocated to arms, pushing our world toward war and destruction.

The destruction of communism and the emergence of new independent countries on the international scene heralded the beginning of a new chapter in freedom and human aspirations. But in a short time, incidents such as the civil war in Tajikistan, the Karabakh crisis, and other tragic and bloody incidents in the countries of the former Soviet Union prevented us from being optimistic in our analyses of political and social movements in the region and the world. [passage omitted]

It was assumed that with the end of the Cold War and the conclusion of the rivalry between the two superpowers, regional wars and conflicts would also end. But they did not. And if we sum up all the regional conflicts and wars, we will unfortunately reach the bitter conclusion that these conflicts have actually increased.

What Is the Reason for This?

One can think of many answers to this question. The problems that were optimistically ignored in the post-Cold War atmosphere are now emerging, and human society is being called on to help find just solutions.

For dozens of years, security was only defined on the basis of "deterrence" and on "balance of power" or, better said, "balance of fear"—a definition that was gradually spread by the big powers to the other parts of the world. And all military and arms strategies were formulated on the basis of the theory that national security meant the absence of military threat—something that could be achieved only by establishing an arms balance with the potential and actual enemy. [passage omitted]

On the basis of the above theory, the removal of former enemies dictated that new enemies be found because without an enemy, the philosophy behind existence would disappear. And this is exactly what happened to some of the veteran analysts in the West. Communism was the enemy that had been removed, and claiming not to have any enemies anymore would mean negating themselves. Therefore, they moved in another direction and declared the Islamic awakening as their enemy, at a time when all political experts know that the Islamic awakening is radically different, both in objectives and in the way it moves, from communism. [passage omitted]

Another special characteristic of the veteran analysts is to draw a line between national security and regional and global security. From this standpoint, what is important is national security even though it is at the cost of upsetting regional or world security. But we

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know that a national security that is achieved in the short run when the security of neighbors is upset, is transient, while a lasting security is one that ensures the security of neighbors, of the region and, ultimately, of the world. And it is within this context that the Islamic Republic of Iran defines its national security and the reason why it seeks its national security within regional security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran and Regional Security

The efforts that the Islamic Republic of Iran is exerting—both in the Persian Gulf, in all the neighboring countries, and in Central Asia and the Caucasus—for the sake of regional peace, security, and stability are part of the strategy that the Islamic Republic's national security can be achieved through the establishment of regional peace and security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly shown that it wants to end any type of threat to the independence, security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all the region's countries and that it wants the existing conflicts and differences in the region to be solved through peaceful means.

In the Persian Gulf, the Islamic Republic's constant efforts have been to prove to all the region's countries that insecurity and instability are not to anyone's benefit and that these countries should—steadfastly and through good will and sincere and fraternal cooperation—put an end to the pretext for foreign intervention. The Persian Gulf, which is the source of a large part of the world's energy needs and is a geographically strategic area, is of vital importance, not only for the region's countries, but for all the world. Any incident there has direct and indirect repercussions for the entire world. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always stressed that Persian Gulf problems should be solved through sincere talks among the region's countries. And this year, by displaying its good will, it has once again proven its readiness to solve problems and to overcome misunderstandings with its neighbors. The Islamic Republic of Iran has the longest shores along the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. It is aware of its responsibilities in promoting peace and security and it has spared no efforts in this direction.

Today a large part of our country's budget is allocated to economic and social development and to reconstruction projects. Many of our military industries have been transformed into non- military industries and, despite the sensitive situation in the region and our bitter experience of foreign aggression, an average of only 1.6 percent of the country's gross national product is allocated to defense, while Iran's neighbors continue their astronomic arms purchases. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the formation of security and cooperation with the participation of all the Persian Gulf countries will reduce arms rivalries and will ensure the free flow of oil, which will lead to economic flourishing in this sensitive and strategic area. In other words, the responsibility of safeguarding Persian Gulf security rests on the shoulders of the region's countries.

Political observers are very well aware of the Islamic Republic's constructive role in establishing security in northern Iraq and in preventing further bloodshed among the Kurds. They are also aware of how the Islamic Republic of Iran, despite the irreparable losses it suffered during the eight years of the dastardly war which the Iraqi regime imposed on the Iranian nation, still continues to defend Iraq's territorial integrity.

While the world is only sitting back and watching the oppression and pain suffered by the Afghan nation, the Islamic Republic of Iran is exerting many humanitarian efforts to solve that country's problems.

After 14 years of brave resistance against the foreign aggressors, the people of Afghanistan are once again living through a regrettable phase of tragedy and domestic tension filled with massacres and adversity. Both throughout the Afghan nation's 14 years of resistance against the foreign aggressor, and during the current critical situation, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always stood next to this fraternal nation and has exerted all its efforts to solve the existing crises. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always tried to make all the Afghan groups realize the fact that the only solution to the Afghan crisis is through talks and negotiations among all the Afghan jehadi groups and that this is the only guarantee for a more hopeful and happier future for the Afghan Muslims. Our policy in Afghanistan is to prevent war and fratricide and to encourage the conflicting groups to sit down at the negotiating table to achieve understanding. We have had extremely useful cooperation with the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference toward this end.

Hosting the more than 1.5 million remaining Afghan refugees, sending humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, and expressing readiness for any type of help in the reconstruction of Afghanistan are among the Islamic Republic's other efforts to establish peace and stability in the region.

The Islamic Republic's efforts to solve the Tajikistan problem in cooperation with the UN secretary general, the convening of the second round of peace talks in Tehran, and participation in all the other rounds of peace talks in the other countries, as well as the sensitive role that the Islamic Republic plays in this are well known by all. It is very clear that the Islamic Republic's influence

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in overcoming conflicts has decreased the tension in the Tajikistan crisis.

The Islamic Republic's belief in the legal and accepted principles on the non-use of force in international relations and in condemning occupation—which was displayed by Iran's explicit stand in the conflict between the Republic of Azerbaijan and Armenia and by calling on them to find a political solution to the Karabakh crisis—are other examples of the Islamic Republic's efforts to safeguard regional stability and security.

In the Karabakh region, the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed concern from the very start over the continuation and protraction of the crisis. It focused all its attention on stopping the conflict which, ultimately, led to a cease-fire and the start of talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Unfortunately, the international community and especially the Security Council, failed to seize the opportunity to strengthen the cease-fire by dispatching peace- keeping forces there and to thus pave the way for a lasting peace; and the war and bloodshed resumed.

From our point of view, the Karabakh crisis can only be solved through talks, on the basis of mutual respect, non-intervention in each other's domestic affairs, and the preservation of both countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity. During the past few years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has tried to create a favorable atmosphere for political talks between the conflicting sides. We will continue our efforts, and we support any effort that is aimed at achieving a peaceful solution to this crisis.

The Islamic Republic's firm belief in the principle that the only way to ensure peace, stability, and security is through regional cooperation is the reason for its serious initiatives in expanding bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The role of the Economic Cooperation Organization—ECO—with objectives such as expanding trade among its members, creating conditions for lasting economic growth in each and every member- country, strengthening mutual ties among the members, and participating in world trade is important. We believe that the ECO members' efforts to overcome obstacles to regional development by expanding mutual cooperation and consolidating cooperation with other countries and the world will play an outstanding role in consolidating regional stability and in strengthening international peace and security.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was also a pioneer in the creation of the Caspian Sea Cooperation Council in order to preserve the environment and make good use of this sea's resources by its littoral countries. The Islamic Republic's emphasis on determining the legal status of the Caspian Sea is also precisely within the context of the policy of solving regional problems with the help of the region's countries and of creating a favorable atmosphere for regional cooperation.

Iran Expels Bahraini Diplomat

LD0102171596 Tehran IRNA in English 1659 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 1, IRNA — Bahraini Embassy's second secretary in Tehran, 'Ali Ibrahim Alsisi, was asked to leave Tehran within one week, a Foreign Ministry official said on Thursday [1 February].

The official said the expulsion of Alsisi is a consequence of his involvement in matters which is against diplomatic norms.

Government Details Number of Iranian Majles Candidates

LD0102164696 Tehran IRNA in English 1604 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 1, IRNA — The Ministry of the Interior said here on Thursday that 1,743 candidates have registered with the governerates throughout the country until Thursday.

43 candidates are women and 10 of are from religious minorities, the ministry said.

197 candidates have registered with Tehran governerate, 45 of whom are members of parliament.

Iranian Election Said Coming Amid 'Stifling Economic Crisis'

LD0102094496 Riyadh SPA in English 0420 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Riyadh, 31 Jan — Atmospheres heavy with a stifling economic crisis and surfacing internal disputes after the fall of the last figleaf which used to cover it with the advent of the legislative elections on 8 March are prevailing over the ruling Iranian regime. According to what AFP has transmitted, Iranian economic circles have expressed obvious concern over medium-term debts, estimated at $3 billion, due on Tehran.

Perhaps the best evidence for the deterioration of the conditions inside Iran is what an Iranian teacher said when she heard officials repeating that everything was fine. She said: Everyone thinks that we are living in a continuous honeymoon, or that we live in Switzerland, though everyone knows that life is becoming more difficult every month. She added that the mounting

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wave of resentment among the middle and poor classes which formed the regime's fundamental base is the most eloquent reply to the statements of Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, [in which] he promised that the end to the crisis is near...except that it seems that his extreme optimism did not convince anyone.

Iran Daily Comments on Visit of France's Chirac to U.S.

LD0102140696 Tehran IRNA in English 1301 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 1, IRNA — An English daily Thursday welcomed President Chirac's state visit to Washington next week as an appropriate opporutnity to remind U.S. President Bill Clinton that the jungle-rule is not applicable in today's world.

TEHRAN TIMES was commenting on the statement made by President Chirac's spokeswoman, Catherine Colonna, Tuesday who underlined that the anti-Iran bill proposed by Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato contains unacceptable measures of extra-territorial jurisdiction which violate international laws.

She also expressed France's concern on the U.S. Congress legislation to punish foreign oil firms which trade with such countries as Iran and Libya.

"Colonna's statement is welcomed not only by Iran, but by all Third World countries as well. The Third World expects France to protest the U.S. violation of international laws which is a major threat to the world peace."

Terming U.S. move as an infringement upon the sovereignty of Iran's trade partners, the paper said, "indifference to the U.S. bullying is tantamount to accepting U.S. supremacy as the sole superpower in a new world setting."

The editorial said that the White House should bear in mind that the world "is not absolutely open to their blackmail."

Stressing that the U.S. is neither militarlily nor economically an undisputed world leader, the editorial concluded, "the White House officials can realize this only if countries like France try to make them understand."

Iranian Commentary Views Israel-Syria Talks in Maryland

LD0102212296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The second stage of Damascus-Tel Aviv talks concluded in Maryland, United States, without any achievements on 31 January. This happened despite all the hue and propagation launched concerning these talks. This stage of talks was held in the presence of the American delegation and chaired by the White House special coordinator in the Mideast talks, Denis Ross. According to Mr. Ross, next week the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will once again visit the region, and after meeting with [Syrian President] Hafiz al-Asad and [Israeli Prime Minister] Shim'on Peres, he will announce whether the Maryland talks will continue or that the United States will propose a new formula.

Political analysts believe that bringing up such issues by the American officials speaks of the uselessness of a series of talks already held in Maryland between the Syrian and Israeli delegations. Since late last year the Maryland talks started under the condition when those in charge of these talks stated that these talks would be different and that new achievements were expected from the Damascus- Tel Aviv talks after four years. But the passage of only one month since the holding of Maryland talks and four rounds of concise sessions between the delegations, where the last round included a session by the expert military and economic delegations, speaks of the depth of differences and the recession evident in the talks.

The Syrians, in the meantime, insist on the withdrawal of the Zionist regime army from the Golan Heights as well as equal security arrangements on the two sides of the borders. Whereas it appears that the Zionist regime shows no interest to withdraw from the occupied Golan region and instead insists on special security arrangements, based on which the Syrians should station military forces miles away from the Golan border. The Golan Heights were occupied in June 1967. Of course such a domination-seeking demand by Tel Aviv had prevented talks from reaching any results.

In addition to all that, bringing up the issue of premature elections in Israel is a question that has roused the opposition of Syria. According to political circles, especially the Arab circles, the Syrians are presently under simultaneous pressures from the side of the United States and Israelis. On the one hand, the American officials intend to take advantage of an ace in the future U.S. presidential elections. This will only be possible if the talks are concluded in a manner favorable to Americans and the Israelis where the Syrians will agree to compromise with the Zionist regime. On the other hand, in view of the situation he has imposed on the talks and his obstructionisms in the way of talks, the prime minister of the Zionist regime speaks of dissolution of the parliament, premature elections, and shortage of time. In fact, through exerting pressure on Syria, the prime minister

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of the Zionist regime attempts to make Syria give in to the kind of peace desired by the Zionist regime. But if the talks go nowhere, Peres will call for the dissolution of the parliament and holding of premature elections and in this manner he will try to stabilize his [word indistinct] position in the Zionist regime and then later pursue the policy of wait and see.

At any rate, in view of the existing evidence, it will be rather naive to expect that the talks will reach a result even after Mr. Christopher's visit to the Middle East region.

Tehran Radio Views UN Security Council Resolution on Sudan

LD0102145496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1104 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] As you might have heard in this morning's news bulletins, the UN Security Council last night passed a resolution which asks Sudan to hand over to the Ethiopian authorities the three suspected of an assassination attempt against Husni Mubarak.

The UN Security Council's resolution also asks Sudan to end what has been described as supporting terrorism and helping terrorist activities inside Sudan.

As it was expected, the action has brought negative reactions and reflections inside Sudan, as well as among the Islamic circles in northeastern Africa. Political and press communities and university circles in northern Africa have considered the approval of the resolution, similar to other measures by world aggorance, as a way of putting pressures on Khartoum. They have described as an example of colonial hostilities the fact that Sudan's declaration of readiness for any kind of cooperation has been ignored.

Regardless of the pretext under which the resolution was issued, a question still remains whether the UN Security Council will still show such reactions to other similar cases? Or if on the basis of the council's other behaviors, in this case too, it is acting on basis of the choice and desire of superpowers.

It is natural that under the conditions where the Arab-African press reports on possible implementation of the American anti-Sudan conspiracies, and on the other hand, a number of Sudan's neighbors have made their main duty to embark on repeated military aggression against Sudan's territory, the approval of any type of resolution against Sudan will cause enormous suspicion. Under such a situation, it is necessary for the Security Council, first of all, to pave the way to prevent imposing any pressure, and on the other hand, prepare the ground for respecting cultural and ideological tendencies in a region.

It is obvious that otherwise, not only will the other aims of the Security Council and the UN Charter remain out of reach, but it will cause further escalation of cultural and national tendencies and create a favorable reaction toward the materialistic and Western tendencies.

Iranian Paper: Bahrain 'Island of Instability'

NC0202100496 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 24 Jan 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "Bahrain—A Peaceful Coastline"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In recent years Bahrain has become an island of instability, but one with a peaceful coastline. The dictatorship of the al-Khalifah clan in this shaykhdom wants to divert people from domestic instability by depicting its shore as turbulent.

The regime's opponents have disrupted things internally but the central government continues to direct its propagandist attacks—in unison with regional and Western circles—at the Islamic Republic of Iran. Did this instability originate from Bahrain's northern shore?

Today, not only in Bahrain, but in most governments with a hereditary dictatorial system (!) the people have risen up against it. In Bahrain the wave of support for political rights and freedoms, freedom of expression, and the right to political participation is spreading daily. Suppression is a short-term, temporary, and unsuccessful measure. The discontented can be satisfied only through political rights.

But the al-Khalifah regime wants to put off fulfilling this rightful demand as long as possible. The 8,000-strong Defense Ministry unit is on the alert while the arrests and torture of religious leaders and sacrilege of mosques and worshippers continue. The domestic front has become unusually disturbed. In the last two days of the past week over 80 cases of fires and dozens of explosions took place.

To divert attention from what is threatening the Manama administration, the government accused Iran of interfering. But Tehran and the Bahraini dissidents have rightfully rejected the accusation. The Bahraini foreign minister has gone to New York for talks with the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Most Western governments, including the United States and Britain, have an arcane accord with the propaganda of the Bahraini Government on the Bahraini crisis, since the opposition has directed the sharp edge of

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its propaganda at despotism and the powers of world arrogance.

The threat to the residential compounds of the American and British advisers to this government is ample testimony to the sentiment against the powers of arrogance in the Bahrain uprising. The West has also condemned the revolutionary violence, interpreting it as subversion!

With regard to these threats, which are typical of the actions of governments before a revolution or political upheaval, the embassies of these governments have asked their citizens in Bahrain to comply with security measures. In defense of Bahrain's security and, covertly, to protect their own respective interests, the United States and Britain have maintained tacit silence over Manama's human rights violations. They are even cooperating with the al-Khalifahs on even greater violations.

Today the crisis of legitimacy and political participation is the most important issue occupying the Bahraini rulers. This government immediately accepted Qatar's stance on border differences so that it could concentrate all its energy on restoring temporary stability within the country.

But the new phase of instability is more extensive; any semblance of stability based on strangulation is the lull before the storm.

Pakistan

Pakistan Rejects India's Allegation of Missile Attack

BK0202042396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has rejected the Indian allegation expecting a missile attack from Pakistani troops at the Indian military post in the occupied Kashmir. A Defense Ministry spokesman in Islamabad has described it as baseless and a cover-up ploy. While commenting on an AFP report, the spokesman said these allegations are due to international condemnation for killing of several people in a recent rocket attack on forward Kahuta.

Pakistani Editorial Criticizes U.S. Silence on Indian Rocket Attack

BK0202035596 Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu 30 Jan 96 P 10

[Editorial: "The United States' Meaningful Silence"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Senate has strongly criticized India's latest stand on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and its alleged preparations for a second nuclear test, saying Indian moves will escalate tension in South Asia. Prominent Democratic Senator Tom Harkin has described the proposed Indian nuclear test as a game of death and advised both India and Pakistan to eschew the path of "nuclear conflict." He has also asked Washington to help organize a dialogue between Pakistan and India, both of whom should be subsequently persuaded to discuss the Kashmir issue. Meanwhile, the United States has also assured Pakistan that it will help Islamabad in every manner it can in the context of the situation arising out India's latest Prithvi missile tests.

The U.S. concern over India's planned nuclear test and its missile program is justified. Two senior officials of the U.S. Administration had recently visited New Delhi and Islamabad and conveyed to leaders of these countries Washington's concern in this regard. Lately, the Indian leadership has been whipping up a war hysteria in South Asia, but the United States has remained silent on this. We are living in a modern era of scientific and technological advance. As a result of the phenomenal development of the means of communication, the entire world has shrunk into a small village. Even the news about minor happenings in any part of the globe spreads to the length and breadth of the world in moments. We, therefore, cannot accept that in this era of development and wonders, the United States has still not received reports about the Indian rocket attack on a mosque at forward Kahuta in Azad Kashmir, killing worshipers there, and about its continued violations of the Line of Control.

Pakistani president, prime minister, the chief of army staff, and several other members of the government and politicians have been expressing concern daily over India's dangerous intentions and the threat of a war. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference in occupied Kashmir has been making fervent appeals to the United Nations, and the leaders and the general public of Azad Kashmir have been staging massive protests against the Indian action, but, surprisingly, the U.S. leaders are still silent on this issue. They cannot see anything other than India's nuclear and missile tests. We had urged the Pakistani rulers the other day to apprise all foreign diplomatic representatives in Islamabad of the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Indian Subcontinent and to take steps to mobilize international public opinion against India's aggressive designs. We had advised that the Pakistani ambassadors based in foreign countries should also be asked to swing into action in this context.

We think it is now high time that U.S. attention was drawn to the threat of a war in the Indian Subcontinent and the U.S. Administration asked on which side it stands. The United States has set up a espionage system

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all over Pakistan with which it can hear every voice that is raised in this region, but, heaven knows why, it is unaware of the concerns and anxieties of the Pakistani national circles over the grave situation that now prevails in South Asia.

Pakistani Spokesman on CTBT, India's Plans, U.S. Official's Visit

BK0102150296 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad today that Pakistan desires early conclusion of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT], warding off any lacuna for permitting nuclear tests. Briefing the newsmen, the spokesman said we are anxious to ensure that CTBT is concluded at an early date and that there is no loopholes for any tests. He said our keenness on this issue has received a fresh impetus because of the recent developments, in particular India's preparations to conduct its second nuclear test.

Commenting on Indian designs, the spokesman further said Pakistan is opposed to India's plan to carry out second nuclear test. He said we have approached the world opinion to put pressure on India to prevent conditions in which India detonates the bomb or makes a test and forces the countries around it and the world to respond in whatever manner they consider appropriate.

The spokesman also confirmed that the Kabul administration has sent a letter expressing regret and showing readiness to compensate for the ransacking of Pakistan Embassy in Kabul. However, the spokesman said that the reopening of Pakistan's diplomatic mission in Kabul in the near future is not under consideration.

Describing the visit of the American deputy adviser on national security, Mr. Sandy Berger [name as heard], he said Mr. Berger discussed bilateral and regional affairs with President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. He said the post-Brown Amendment situation also came up during the discussion, and attention was drawn toward India's test firing of its long-range Prithvi missile and New Delhi's stubbornness regarding the future nuclear explosion.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka Radio Reports President's Remarks on 31 Jan Blast

BK0102133796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation Radio Network in English 1245 GMT 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga says that the government is working with a firm determination to restore peace in the country by providing a lasting settlement to the ethnic crisis, but the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists have once again resorted to mass destruction of life and property within the city of Colombo. The president says that it is a great shock and sorrow to herself personally and to the peace-loving Sri Lankan citizens by this dastardly act of terrorism. [sentence as heard]

She expressed her heartfelt condolences to the families of those who were killed and expressed her concern for those who have been wounded by the explosion. The president paid gratitude to the security forces, the fire brigade, the hospital staff, and all sections of the people who have in numerous ways fulfilled their duty in an exemplary manner during this crisis situation.

The president says that it is [words indistinct] the people instead of being enslaved by their emotions have acted with immense responsibility, intelligence, and patience. She added that this is not the first time that the LTTE has engaged in such dastardly acts of terror in and around the city of Colombo. In the earlier part of 1986, within a period of a few months, 12 explosions were carried out by the LTTE. She noted that the Tigers have resorted to this act of desperation at a time when the group has suffered a major military setback at the hands of the security forces in the north. This unfortunate incident has once again reminded us that, while the threat to Sri Lankan society by terrorism must be firmly dealt with, the need to also eliminate the causes that led to such terror tactics must necessarily be eliminated.

Sri Lankan Police Identify 31 Jan Suicide Truck Bomber

BK0202051096 Colombo DAILY NEWS (SPECIAL EDITION) in English 1 Feb 96

[Report by S. Selvakumar and Keerthi Mendis from "Special Edition" of DAILY NEWS on 1 Feb published as a supplement to its regular 1 Feb edition containing latest information on 31 Jan bomb blast in Colombo — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] urban guerrilla strike unit which wrecked devastation in Fort yesterday slipped into Colombo from the North on January 8, the two captured Tiger cadres have told their police interrogators.

The suicide truck bomber himself has been identified as a man named 'Raj'.

The explosives-filled lorry had been escorted by two other trishaws with armed rebels in addition their own trishaw, the two captured rebels have revealed.

The other trishaws are believed to have slipped away in the confusion after the blast.

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The two arrested cadres, named as Rasu and Kittu, had in their possession a sophisticated radio transceiver hand set with a capacity of 99 channels, police said. They were caught with their weapons in Pettah just 20 minutes after the blast.

Acting on information provided by the two arrested suspects, police last evening arrested four other suspects in Kotahena, Colombo Police DIG [Deputy Inspector General] D.M.T.B. Dissanayake disclosed.

The police have learnt that the Tiger bomber squad, which originally came from Jaffna via Kilinochchi, had travelled South in a lorry transporting rice.

The design of the bomb had been drawn up in Jaffna, the police have learnt.

The original target for this bomb was the 32-storyed Bank of Ceylon headquarters tower, the two suspects have told police.

Several more Tiger operatives had earlier been deployed to study the environs of the Bank building for the planning of the attack.

The lorry used in the attack had vehicle documents issued in Anuradhapura, police said. Some documents have been found intact at the blast site.

Report Details Suicide Bomber's Attack in Sri Lanka

BK0202053296 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 2 Feb 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Three LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres named Raju, Kutti and Raghu had carried out Wednesday's [31 January] bomb attack near the Central Bank building in Fort Colombo.

Of them Raju had been at the wheel of the explosive laden lorry which rammed into the Central Bank building police investigations have revealed.

Raju was killed in the explosion while Raghu and Kutti were arrested in the Pettah with the assistance of the public as they were trying to make their getaway.

Police said according to preliminary investigations the Isuzu lorry (42-6452) involved in the explosion had come to Colombo with a load of rice from Vavuniya. It is not clear whether the explosives were fitted into the vehicle at Kilinochchi or Colombo.

Police request the public who have any information regarding this lorry to contact them on Telephone Numbers, 693173, 691500, 685153, 447319, 432333, 422176, or 324998.

Police said investigations further revealed that one Rajasingham had obtained a permit in Vavuniya for the lorry to proceed to Colombo with the consignment of rice. It was driven from Vavuniya by one Navaratnam who tendered his identity card at the Vavuniya checkpoint.

The lorry had arrived in Colombo around 6 am on January 30 when Navaratnam handed it over to Raju. There after Raju vanished with the lorry.

Around 7 pm on January 30 Raju had driven the lorry to the playground near the Wolfendhal flats.

The task of triggering off the explosion had been entrusted to Raghu and Kutti who are now in Police custody. They are aged 24 and 26 years respectively. Raghu's address is Vellanthani Kovil, Maduvil (East) Jaffna and Kutti hailed from Nichchman Onakanthai, Jaffna.

As the lorry approached Janadhipati Mawatha, Raghu and Kutti were seated in the lorry alongside Raju who was driving it.

As the lorry reached the Central Bank building Raghu and Kutti had jumped off and started shooting all round. Amidst the pandemonium one of them had hung an explosive device on the iron railings in front of the Central Bank blasting them instantly.

The other had sat in a three wheel taxi parked near by and activated its engine. As the lorry rammed into the building the one who fixed the explosive device to the iron railings too had entered the taxi and the two had made a quick exit.

People who had seen the two escaping in the three wheeler had given chase and Raghu and Kutti had abandoned the taxi near the Fort railway station and fled before they were apprehended at Rohini lane, Pettah.

Police found two T56 rifles, 114 round of ammunition, explosive kit and a brand new walkie talkie.

Police are trying to ascertain whether the Rajasingham and Navaratnam registered at Vavuniya checkpoint are one and the same person, the place in Colombo where the consignment was unloaded and the whereabout of the lorry between 6 am and 7 pm on January 30.

A police team comprising SSPs [Senior Superintendent of Police] Lionel Gunatilleke, O.K. Hemachandra, Bandula Wickmasinghe, ASPs [Assistant Superintendent of Police] Kithsiri Ganegama, Nissanka Dharmaratne, Gamini Dissanayake, S. Dalapatado and Inspector Nilavedeen is investigating directed by DIG [Deputy Inspector General] T.M.B. Dissanayake and DIG (CID) T.V. Sumanasekara.

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Sri Lankan Editorial Urges Crackdown on 'Terrorists' After Bomb Blast

BK0202060496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 2 Feb 96

[Editorial: "Looking to the Future" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Wednesday's [31 January] devastating barbaric attack on the Central Bank appears to have been carefully planned out by the terrorists. The gunmen accompanying the explosives laden truck had first smashed the security barrier at the Bank's entrance with aid of a rocket propelled grenade. They had then engaged the security personnel in a fire-fight while the bomb was set off.

The Bank's unarmed security personnel had apparently done their best. They had done everything in their power to ward off the attack. Still, some uncomfortable questions remain. How, for instance, did the truck carrying the bomb and about half a dozen gun toting terrorists manage to penetrate the heart of the city undetected? Apparently, it had traversed some distance unhindered, without raising the slightest suspicion.

This surprise attack on the Central Bank building and the stealthy journey of the explosives loaded truck should compel those who have condemned the examinations conducted at check points in the city and surprise raids on safe houses to re-think their opposition.

The leader of the Opposition Ranil Wickremesinghe, for instance, is a good example of the split thinking about security. In Nuwara Eliya addressing a Tamil audience he said in effect that security measures should be confined to the North-East because the ethnic problem was there. Today he is blaming the government for inadequate security in the city.

The security forces and police are admittedly stretched to the limit. The country's defence and security requirements are such that these personnel have to be spread out thin over the length and breadth of the island, making a hundred percent, fool proof security system somewhat difficult to achieve. Still, some mitigatory measures could be adopted which would make the terrorists' task increasingly difficult.

One of these is to declare sensitive areas like Colombo Fort special security zones, as was done during the Second World War. This will make it necessary to adopt special security measures, such as intensified checking and surveillance, which will considerably retard the movement of terrorists.

While a highly security-conscious public is urgently needed, supported hundred percent by all communities, efforts must be made to expand and train civil defence units in the country in all aspects of security. They should, for example, be smart enough to detect, admittedly a difficult task, those terrorists among civilians by their uncomfortable curious gait. A good example of such detection was given by the two civilians in the Pettah area who tracked and collared two terrorists who were attempting to get away after bombing the Central Bank. In this instance, vigilance and commonsense on the part of the civilians paid high dividends. Trained civilians could, thus, prove to be an asset in this battle against the Tiger terror.

The question also has to be asked how a bomb as powerful and lethal as that which exploded on Wednesday could have been assembled undetected. A terrorist thrives on absolute secrecy. His evil machinations just cannot be carried out among inquisitive neighbours and on-lookers, for instance. Apparently, the Colombo-based LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] bomber is operating in very safe-houses amidst a sympathetic, indifferent or coerced social environment. So surveillance of possible terrorist haunts has to be intensified. And this should not be viewed as a harassment of civilians.

Vulnerable, but important public and private sector institutions should also take the relevant measures to safeguard their property and assets. Special systems should be devised to preserve, for instance, important documents and cash. We cannot afford to take chances any longer.

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